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Minutes

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Ques - ... but are the end  
of the line?

Ques - How are the  
provisions fulfilled?

Ques - What were the means  
... in occasional, not a very  
... range with the trial  
of the ... in ...  
... character?

# THE RIVALS.

TRACY'S AMBITION.

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BY

THE AUTHOR OF "THE COLLEGIANS."

---

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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NEW-YORK :

PRINTED BY J. & J. HARPER, 23 CLIFF-STREET.

SOLD BY COLLINS AND HANNAH, COLLINS AND CO., G. AND C. AND H. CARVILL, O. A. ROORHACH, WHITE, GALLAGHER, AND WHITE, A. T. GOODRICH, W. B. GILLEY, E. BLISS;—BOSTON, RICHARDSON, LORD, AND HOLDSBROOK, HILLIARD, GRAY, AND CO., GRACIER AND BREWSTER, CARTER AND KENNEDY, E. F. AND C. WILLIAMS, AND WELLS AND LILLY;—BALTIMORE, JENNINGS AND COOK, W. AND J. NEAL, JOSEPH JEWETT, AND F. LUCAS, JR.

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1830.



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[Griffin, Gerald.]



Porcellian Club

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE first of the two following Tales was suggested during a ramble in the fashionable scenery of Wicklow. A gentle morning in spring beheld the writer descending the sequestered road which leads to the Valley of the Seven Churches. This exquisite scene of loneliness and gloom was cheered at the moment by a partial gleam of sunshine, which shone on the deserted churches, and flung the shadow of the round tower (a gnomon raised by Time to count his centuries) across the uneven plain on which it stands. I paused to look upon the lake which lay beyond the ruins ; a cold and motionless expanse of water, prisoned in by mountains of rugged granite, with scanty traces of foliage to qualify the rudeness of the clifted heights. Yet there was more of a religious sadness than of sternness of terror in the character of the scene. It was a fitting solitude for the abode of those who fled to its quiet sanctuaries in ages long gone by, to repair the passionate excesses of their youth, and meditate, in sorrow rather than in anger, on the thoughtlessness of men. Here it is, returning from the turmoil of London, and agitating pursuits, that the wanderer feels all the folly and idleness of the life which he has led ; that his heart sickens at the recollection of the dissipation of cities, that he opens his soul to nature as to a long forsaken mother, and thinks, with an aching bosom, of the purity, the simplicity, the religious regularity of his childhood. Here it is that we seem once more, in the keenness of awakened memory, to lose those friends that have been snatched away from us by death or distance ; that the still reproaches of that mysterious principle in our nature, which points to the eternal object of our existence, steal upwards through the tumults of our passions and our interests, and speak to our hearts, like the voice of a long forgotten friend. The rocks and woods, the lakes and waterfalls, the ruins and the sober day-light, and the whisper of the persuasive wind, in scenes

like this, convince the heart more readily than volumes of ingenious controversy, read over with aching head and weary eyes in the midnight chamber. Here we feel the truth that is too bright even for the eagle eye of reason to contemplate. Ambition seems a dream, philosophy a guess, our spirit seems to mount above its tenement, and to behold the passions, the faculties, the sciences, and the occupations of man at that leisurely elevation where alone it can become acquainted with their relative value. Here we discover all the superiority of virtue over knowledge, and remember, with all that zest which feeling gives even to the oldest truths, those fundamental principles of virtue, which in our days of feverish inquiry we were accustomed to despise for their want of novelty. As the thrilling music of the Christian churches, first drew those tears from the eyes of Augustine which he afterwards shed from a purer and loftier impulse, so here we are won back to the love of innocence by the poetry of nature. She reproaches us with having so long preferred, to her infinite varieties of form and colour, of sound and fragrance, the coarseness of scenic imitations, and all the low artificial mockeries of her excellence which the palaces of art present us. She seems to open her arms and invite us to "return!" to blush for the meanness of our taste—to forsake the theatre, the picture gallery, the library; and to study character in her towns and villages, beauty in her plains and valleys, sublimity in her mountains, and wisdom in the economy of her mighty system.

I was endeavouring to decipher the characters on an enormous granite rood or cross, which stands in the grave yard of the Cathedral, when a singular looking figure approached me from the road. He was a young man with a finely formed head and face, resembling the Jewish in its best conformation, a mass of light hair slightly curling, and a handsome beard about an inch and a half in length, which if worn in affectation, was affectation certainly in its best taste. Touching his hat as he came near, he offered his services as cicerone during my ramble round the lake, enhancing their value at the same time by informing me that he had acted as guide to a number of celebrated literary characters; indeed, to all the well known people who had visited the lakes within the last ten years. As a farther inducement, he told me that some of those individuals, availing

themselves of information which he had given them, "bein' great ould historians themselves, and havin' recourse to other ould hithories, at home, between 'em all had magnified that place to a very great pitch." Like honest Lien Chi Altangi, who bought a silk night-cap which he did not want, because the duke of —— had had some off the same piece, I accepted the services of George Winder, in compliment to all the "well known people an' ould historians," for whom he had performed the same office.

Feeling an honest ambition to give value for his money, George immediately commenced operations with a volubility characteristic of his vocation. Before we had reached St. Kevin's bed, a recess in the cliff of Lugduff, extremely difficult, and sometimes dangerous of access, he had proved himself an antiquarian, geologist, conchologist, and moral philosopher. He had got a collection of fossils, shells, and old coins, some of which must have been curiosities indeed, for they were issued, he said, "in the time of Nero, two hundred years after the creation." He demonstrated, likewise, that Ireland must have enjoyed a flourishing commerce with foreign nations before the English Conquest, and pointed out to me in evidence of his assertion the sculptured uprights of the chancel window of the cathedral, which he said were made of Portland stone. Following, with much effort, the torrents of erudition which he poured forth, I traced, with still greater exertion, the steep and slippery path which led down the cliff to the bed of the celebrated saint. My guide now and then complimented me on my perseverance, while I affected a smiling ease, at the same time that I cast a shy glance at the lake which lay perpendicularly beneath me, and felt inclined to exclaim with Cobbler Sly, "'Tis a very excellent piece of work, would 'twere over!" This feeling became more sincere, when I approached a particular crisis in the descent, where the climber has to creep down a solid mass of rock, seize hold of a projecting stone, and swing himself over the brow of the cliff, into the recess which appears hewn underneath, and which is hid from his eyes until the moment when he enters it. Here I truly found myself, in the laconic phraseology of old Judy, of Roundwood, "a gent. goin' down the rock of diff." This feat being performed, Winder gave me, for my pains, a long account of the beautiful legend of Cathleen, and informed me that there

was at a little distance a spot called Turn-about Point, which was the scene of a still more arduous feat than that which we had performed. It consisted in proceeding along a narrow shelf made in the perpendicular side of the rocky mountain, until the adventurer approached a point where he must either turn round, at the imminent danger of falling into the Lake, or remain stationary, for it admitted neither of possible progress, nor of safe return.

"Indeed?" said I, "very curious it must be."

"I'll show it to your honour, if you like to try it. I don't doubt but your honour would do it, afther the other."

"Ha—"

"An' we'll have the boat waitin' below, to pick your honour up if you fall."

"I'm afraid it is too far," said I, in a careless manner, "only for that."

"'Tis in the next cliff, sir," said George, "'tis a great thing to do. Three to one o' what tries it falls off into the lake."

"Hum!"—

"There was one drowned below these indeed, not long ago."

"Indeed?"

"This is the way, sir, if you'll folly me, we'll soon come to it."

I thought it better, however, affecting at the same time a careless air, to put off the adventure to another opportunity; the day was now advanced, and I thought I shouldn't mind it that time.

Returning to the Inn at Roundwood, the story of Cathleen, rendered more interesting and impressive by my own experience of the dangers she had dared, came back upon my mind, as I sat in the window at evening, and filled it for hours. Although the world's poetical ear is said to be out of tune, I will venture to relate in metre, a legend which never should be told in prose. There are associations always attending compositions of this kind which make them more interesting to the affections of the writer than they may ever become to another; but those who are familiar with the wild scenery of Wicklow may find some interest in it.

## INTRODUCTION.

### THE FATE OF CATHLEEN.

#### A WICKLOW STORY.

##### I.

Is Luggelaw's deep-wooded vale.  
The summer eve was dying ;  
On lake, and cliff, and rock, and dale.  
A hulling calm was lying ;  
And virgin saints and holy men  
The vesper song were singing,  
And sweetly down the rocky glen  
The vesper bell was ringing

##### II.

Soft gloom fell from the mountain's heights  
Upon the lake declining ;  
And half in gentle shade was drest,  
And half like silver shining—  
And by that shore young Kevin stood,  
His heart with anguish laden ;  
And timid there, with wreathed hands,  
A fair and gentle maiden.

##### III.

And, "Oh," she said, - I've left for thee  
My own beloved sowers.  
The walks I trod in infancy.  
My father's ancient towers.  
I've left for thee my natal hall,  
Where late I lived in splendour,  
And home and friends and fame and all  
I sighed not to surrender."

##### IV.

"Away!" he muttered low : "in youth  
A vow to heaven I've spoken.  
And I will keep my boyish truth  
To age and death unbroken.  
Oh, would'st thou bribe my heart to sin  
Against that high endeavour,  
And cast those teazing eyes between  
That heaven and me for ever?"

## INTRODUCTION.

## V.

The maid looked up in still surprise,  
 Her cheeks with tear-drops streaming.  
 A guileless light was in her eyes,  
 Like childhood's sorrow gleaming.  
 "Oh, had I here a heaven to give  
 Thou should'st be blest this hour;  
 Then how should I thine hope bereave  
 Of that eternal dower?"

## VI.

"Ah, no—Cathleen will ask no more,  
 For home and friends forsaken,  
 Than here upon this peaceful shore  
 To see the morn awaken:  
 Beneath thy holy roof to dwell  
 A torn and timid stranger;  
 And watch thee in thy lonely cell  
 In sickness and in danger.

## VII.

"To rouse thee when the cowed train  
 Their matin beads are telling,  
 To hear young Kevin's fervid strain  
 Amid the anthem swelling.  
 To smile whene'er thy smiles I see,  
 To sigh when thou art sighing,  
 To live while life is left to thee,  
 And die when thou art dying."

## VIII.

"My prayers," he said, "were little worth.  
 While thou wert kneeling near me;  
 My hymns were dull as songs of earth,  
 If thou went by to hear me.  
 Oh, you are young and guiltless still,  
 To sin and shame a stranger,  
 And what to thee seems pure from ill  
 To me looks dark with danger.

## IX.

"There is a heaven in yon blue sphere,  
 Where joy abounds for ever,  
 There may we fondly meet, but here,  
 In this cold exile, never.  
 There may we look with loving eyes  
 While happy souls are singing,  
 While angel smiles light all the skies,  
 And the bells of heaven are ringing.

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1830.



## INTRODUCTION.

## XV.

"I had a brother in my home  
 I loved—I love him truly;  
 With him it was my wont to roam  
 When morn was breaking newly.  
 With him I've cheered the weary time  
 With cruit\* soft or story,  
 He never spake of secret crime,  
 Of sin, or tainted glory.

## XVI.

"But thou"—"But I," young Kevin said,  
 "Will love thee like that brother;  
 And wilt thou be content, sweet maid,  
 To find in me another?  
 And seek ye but a brother's grace,  
 A brother's calm caresses—"  
 The maiden hid her burning face  
 Within her golden tresses.

## XVII.

"Farewell!" she sighed, "I plead in vain,  
 My dream of love is ended;  
 Thy thoughts of me with thoughts of pain  
 Shall never more be blended.  
 But now the even is falling late,  
 The way is long and lonely,  
 Oh, let me rest within thy gate  
 Till morning rises, only."

## XVIII.

Young Kevin paused—the dew fell chill—  
 The clouds rolled black and swelling;  
 Ah no—he could not deem it ill  
 To lodge her in his dwelling:  
 For churls like Nabal deeply sin  
 And lasting pains inherit,  
 And those who take the stranger in  
 Have patriarchal merit.

## XIX.

But oft he thought, 'mid holy strains,  
 Upon that lovely woman;  
 For, oh, the blood within his veins  
 Was warm, and young, and human.  
 He told his nightly beads in vain,  
 Sleep never came so slowly;  
 And all that night young Kevin's brain  
 Was filled with dreams unholy.

\* A small harp.

## XX.

The young man rose at dawning hour,  
 To chant his first devotion,  
 And, tiptoe, then, to Cathleen's bower  
 He stole, in still'd emotion.  
 Breathless above the maiden's form  
 He hung—and saw her sleeping;  
 Her brow was damp—her cheek was warm,  
 And wore the stains of weeping.

## XXI.

Beside her couched an aged hound  
 (Her Kevin's sole attendant),  
 One hand his sable neck around,  
 Like light in gloom resplendent.  
 The dog sprung up, that hand fell down,  
 As Kevin's sigh came deeper,  
 He crouch'd him at his master's frown,  
 And never woke the sleeper.

## XXII.

And scenes of calm domestic bliss  
 On Kevin's soul came thronging;  
 Endearments soft, and smiling peace,  
 And love, the young heart's longing.  
 Why did he swear in youth to live  
 For saintly duties only?  
 And leave those joys that love can give,  
 To lead a life so lonely?

## XXIII.

Oh!—were he now a bridegroom gay!  
 Lord in his natal tower,  
 And were this morn his bridal day,  
 And this his marriage bower:—  
 Where were the wondrous ill he said  
 To him, to earth, to Heaven?  
 Just then, the dreamer turned her head,  
 And murmured deep “My Kevin!”

## XXIV.

He started, trembled, burned, his limbs  
 Shook with the sudden passion;  
 His eye in sudden moisture swims  
 And stirs in maniac fashion.  
 A whirlwind in his brooding soul  
 Arose and tossed it madly;  
 Then swift away the storm clouds roll,  
 And leave him drooping sadly.

## INTRODUCTION.

## XXV.

Again, that fond impassion'd moan  
 Upon her warm lip lingers,  
 He stoops and twines within his own  
 Those white and taper fingers.  
 He bends—ah, hark ! the convent toll !  
 Another knell ! another !  
 They peal a requiem to the soul  
 Of a departed brother !

## XXVI.

Up, and away ! With freezing blood  
 He rushes from the bower,  
 And seeks the beechen solitude  
 Beside the convent tower.  
 There hooded maids and cowed men  
 The dirge of death were singing,  
 And sullen down the rocky glen  
 The knell of death was ringing.

## XXVII.

He raised to Heaven his hands and eyes,  
 Lone, in the silent morning,  
 And said, through humble tears and sighs,  
 "I bless thee for the warning !  
 Oft dost thou thus with sounds of awe  
 My slumbering soul awaken :  
 If I forsake thy love and law  
 Oh, let me be forsaken !

## XXVIII.

"Thou hast a golden crown for those  
 Who love earth's raptures hollow,  
 And firmly still through wiles and woes  
 The light of virtue follow.  
 Oh, be this weak heart still thy care,  
 Be still my soul's defender,  
 And grant that crown for me may wear  
 No soil upon its splendour.

## XXIX.

"If tears, and prayers, and vigils lean,  
 A sin like mine may cover,  
 I'll weep while summer woods are green  
 And watch till time is over.  
 But mighty armour must I weave  
 Against that tempting woman,  
 For oh, she haunts me morn and eve,  
 And I am weak and human."

## XXX.

A counsel woke within his heart,  
 While yet the youth was kneeling,  
 It whispered to his soul—"Depart,  
 And shun the war of feeling.  
 Courage on battle fields is shown  
 By fighting firm and dying,  
 But in the strife with Love alone  
 The glory lies in flying."

## XXXI.

Swift as the sudden wind that sings  
 Across the storm-roused ocean,  
 Swift as the silent prayer that springs  
 Up, warm, from young Devotion,  
 Swift as the brook, the light, the air.  
 As death, time, thought, or glory,  
 Young Kevin flies that valley fair,  
 That lake and mountain hoary."

## XXXII.

And far away, and far away,  
 O'er heath and hill he speeds him.  
 While virtue cheers the desert gray.  
 And light immortal leads him.  
 And far away, and far, and far  
 From his accustomed fountain,  
 Till quench'd in light the morning star.  
 And day was on the mountain.

## XXXIII.

In Luggelaw's deep-wooded vale  
 The summer dawn was breaking.  
 On lake and cliff and wood and dale  
 Light, life, and joy were waking.  
 The skylark in the ear of morn  
 His shrilly fife was sounding,  
 With speckled side, and mossy horn.  
 The deer were up and bounding.

## XXXIV.

Young Nature now all bustlingly  
 Stirs from her nightly slumber,  
 And puts those misty curtains by  
 Her mighty couch that cumber.  
 And dews hang fresh on leaf and thorn,  
 And o'er each eastern highland,  
 Those golden clouds at eve and morn  
 That grace our own green island.

INTRODUCTION.

XXXV.

Light laughed the vale, gay smiled the sea,  
 Earth's welcome glad returning,  
 Like Valour come when wars are done,  
 To Beauty in her mourning.  
 The night calm flies, the ruffling breeze  
 Sports on the glancing water,  
 And gently waves the tangled trees  
 Above the chieftain's daughter.

XXXVI.

Like one in pain, athwart her brow,  
 One hand her hair draws tightly,  
 Now falls that glance in tears, and now  
 It glimmers quick and brightly.  
 For she has missed her votive love,  
 Within his lonely bower,  
 Nor is he in the beechen grove,  
 Nor in the convent tower.

XXXVII.

"I fear," she sighed, and bowed her head.  
 "I fear he told me truly,  
 That sin is in the sunshine bred,  
 And roses springing newly ;  
 For dreary looks this bower to me,  
 Even while those roses wreath it ;  
 And even that sunshine beaming free  
 Hides something dark beneath it.

XXXVIII.

"That dew—" she paused. What foot has been  
 Upon its early brightness ?  
 And left a track of deepening green  
 Across its silver whiteness ?  
 She traced it by the ravell'd brake,  
 And by that silent fountain,  
 And o'er that lawn, and by that lake,  
 And up that hoary mountain.

XXXIX.

But there the thirsty morning sun  
 Had dewless left the heather,  
 Her eye, o'er all that desert dun  
 No single trace can gather.  
 Yet on she went, for in her breast  
 Deep passion fierce was burning ;  
 Passion, that brooks not pause nor rest.  
 And sickens at returning.

## XL.

And far away—and far away—  
 O'er heath and hill she speeds her,  
 While Hope lights up that desert gray,  
 And Love untiring leads her.  
 And far away—and far—and far  
 From lake and convent tower,  
 Till div'd in gloom day's golden car,  
 And night was on the bower.

## XLI.

New thridding lone the rugged Scalp  
 With wounded feet and weary,  
 Now toiling o'er each mimic Alp  
 Of Wicklow's desert dreary.  
 Oh, lonely Bray, thy basin'd tide  
 She passed at sunset mellow,  
 And Ouler's lake when far and wide  
 Its haunted flame shone yellow.

## XLII.

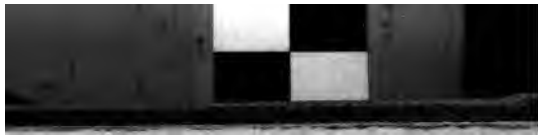
Night fell—day rose—night fell again,  
 And the dim day-dawn found her  
 On Glendalough's deep bosomed plain,  
 With lake and cliff around her.  
 There, tired with travel long and vain,  
 She sinks beside that water,  
 For wo and toil and wasting pain  
 Have worn the Chieftain's daughter.

## XLIII.

Tall, darkening o'er her, high Lugduff  
 Gathered his lordly forehead,  
 And sheath'd his breast in granite rough,  
 Rent crag and splinter horrid.  
 His helm of rock beat back the breeze  
 Without a leaf to wreath it,  
 The vassel waves rolled in to kiss  
 His mailed foot beneath it.

## XLIV.

Sudden, with joyous yelp and bound  
 A dog comes swiftly by her;  
 She knows—she knows that aged hound,  
 And he she loves is nigh her!  
 The warden flies—she follows swift—  
 The dangerous footway keeping,  
 Till deep within the jagged clift  
 She found her Kevin sleeping.



## INTRODUCTION.

## XLV.

With hair tossed out, and hands clench'd tight.  
The rugged granite hugging,  
Like those who with the Hag of Night  
For voice and breath are tugging.  
For oh, he had a horrid dream,  
And every nerve has felt it ;  
And ruin was the gloomy theme,  
And Cathleen's hand had dealt it !

## XLVI.

He dreamed that at the golden gate  
Of Heaven, flung wide and gleaming.  
He heard soft music as he sate,  
And saw bright pinions beaming :  
Millions of sainted shapes he saw,  
In light and fragrance ranging,  
And calm delight, and holy awe,  
In speaking looks exchanging.

## XLVII.

He strove to join that angel band,  
But in the porch before him,  
With mocking eye and warning hand,  
Cathleen stood glooming o'er him ;  
She thrust him from the sainted crowd,  
The gates rung clanging after,  
And on his ear came long and loud  
A peal of fearful laughter.

## XLVIII.

Again it opes, again he tries  
To join that glorious vision,  
Again with lifted hands, and eyes  
Deep fixed in keen derision :  
That minion of the burning deep  
Stands wrapt in gloom before him,  
Up springs he from his broken sleep,  
And sees her trembling o'er him !

## XLIX.

"Vengeance !" he yelled, and backward toss'd  
His arms, and muttered wildly :  
The frightened maid her forehead crossed,  
And drooped before him mildly.  
"Oh, slay me not—Oh, Kevin, spare  
The life thy Lord has given !"   
He paused, and fixed that barren stare.  
Upon the brightening heaven.

## L.

"Cathleen," he sighed, "that timely word  
Has left my hands unbloody;  
But see, the early morning bird,  
Sings in the sunshine ruddy.  
Before that matin strain be o'er  
Fly far, and hate, and fear me;  
For Death is on this gloomy shore,  
And madness haunting near me."

## LI.

With clenched teeth, and painful smile  
(Love's last despairing token),  
She flung her arms around him, while  
Her heart beat thick and broken.  
She clasp'd him as she would have grown  
Into his breast for ever:  
Then fixed her gaze upon his own,  
And sternly whispered—"Never!"

## LII.

Again, again! those madding dreams  
Upon his soul awaken,  
The fiend athwart his eye ball swims—  
Those golden gates are shaken!—  
Again he hears that wringing mock  
The vision'd stillness breaking,  
And hurls the maiden from the rock  
Into the black lake, shrieking!

## LIII.

Down gazed he, phrenzied, on the tide—  
Cathleen! How comes he lonely?  
Why has she left her Kevin's side  
That lived for Kevin only?  
What mean those circles in the lake  
When not a wind is breathing?  
What bubbles on the surface break?  
What horrid foam is wreathing!

## LIV.

Oh, never more—oh, never more,  
By lake or convent tower,  
Shall poor Cathleen come timid o'er  
To haunt his evening bower.  
Oh, never more shall that young eye  
Beam on his prayer and break it,  
And never shall that fond heart's sigh  
Thrill to his own and wake it.



## LV.

The fiend that mocks at human woes  
 Frowned at that maniac minute,  
 For well the baffled demon knows  
 The hand of Heaven was in it.  
 Oh, tempted at that saintly height,  
 If they to earth sunk lowly,  
 She ne'er had been an angel bright,  
 Nor he a victor holy.

## LVI.

Aye, they are in their bowers of rest,  
 With light immortal round them ;  
 Yet pensive heaves the pitying breast  
 To think how soon it found them.  
 The lark ne'er wakes the ruddy morn  
 Above that gloomy water,  
 Where sudden died, and passion-lorn,  
 Cathleen, the Chieftain's daughter.

There was a tomb in the burying ground, respecting which my guide told me a story which furnishes the subject of the first of these Tales. I have not been deterred from using it, by the recollection of a too celebrated Italian novelist, nor of the two greatest of the English competitors of Shakspeare. It appeared to me still virgin ground, for the legend is really an Irish one, and appropriate to the romantic scenery among which its events are laid. Accordingly I have used it, in the phraseology of my guide, to "magnify the place," but to what "pitch," it rests with the reader to determine.

With respect to the second Tale, "Tracy's Ambition," I shall say nothing by way of preface, but leave the autobiographer to speak for himself. I have been unwilling to suppress any portion of his manuscript, although the reader may think him sometimes needlessly minute, and even garrulous. There were one or two incidents, such as the quarrel between the two hags on their comparative pretensions to beauty in their young days, which from the homeliness of its style I was inclined to modify ; but I thought, after all, that it had a rough fidelity to Nature, and that mighty mother is far above the reach of conventional ideas of refinement.

# THE RIVALS.

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## CHAPTER I.

"DOCTOR, darling!"

"Doctor, I'm here since mornin'!"

"Doctor, let me go, an' the heavens bless you. I'm as wake as a piece of wet paper."

"Glory to your soul, doctor, ashore, an' gi' me something for this thremblin' I have. I do be thrembling always, like a straw upon the water."

"Doctor, I *hear* a great pain in my foot, sir. I declare I cried that bottle full to-day morning, with it."

"That was a fine physic you ga' me last night, long life to your honour. It walked me all over. It sarched me finely, long life to your honour."

"There is'nt a bit I ate, doctor, this time back, but what I get a *conceit* again' it the minute afther."

"Doctor, I can make no hand o' my head at all, these days."

"Oh, doctor, what 'll I do at all with these ears o' mine! I'm partly deaf always, an' whenever I do be, I hear great sounds an' noises, waves dashin' again' the bank, and birds whistlin' an'—boo! an' candlesticks; an' when I am deaf entirely, it's then I hear all the bells in Ireland ringin' in my ears."

"Doctor, I have a great *express* upon my heart."

"That girl, sir, that you saw yesterday evening was very bad entirely afther you goin'. Oh, she began screechin' in a manner, that if the priest was at the doore, you'd think he wouldn't overtake her; an' every bit of her so hot, that you'd imagine the clothes would light about her, an' her face the whole time as red as if you threw o' bowl o' blood in it."

"Doctor, a' ra gal! Doctor, darlin', Doctor, ashore!"

Oh, ma gra hu ! Ma grein chree hu, Docthor ! an' let me go !"

Such were a few of the eloquent instances addressed by the throng of patients, without the rails, to Doctor Jervas, one of the attending physicians to a dispensary in a country district of Ireland. Accustomed to the din, he remained with an undisturbed countenance, looking alternately into the haggard, robust, blooming, pale, fair, young and ancient faces that were thrust forwards through the wooden rails, and soliciting his sympathy. Three or four young disciples were hammering away at their mortars in different corners, compounding, like so many Cyclops, the thunderbolts of this great dispenser of health or of its opposite. The scene around him was one which might have waked uneasy sympathies in the heart of a novice. On one side was a stout man roaring aloud in the agonies of tooth-drawing ; on another, a victim to the same "queen of a' diseases," sat wofully, with hand to jaw, contemplating the torture of the sufferer, and inly ruminating his own approaching sorrow ; here lay a stripling with bandaged arm and cadaverous cheek, just recovering with a sigh from the fit of syncope which had been induced by the operation of phlebotomy ; and there knelt, with sleeve upturned, a young Esculapius, wounding, with ruthless lancet, the blue vein in the pretty foot of a girl as fresh as a garland. In one corner was an infant squalling and plunging on its mother's lap, in another the leader of a faction discomfited and head-broken, lamenting over the recollection of his broil, and groaning for the priest. But all those sounds of wo and suffering saluted the ear of the medical adept with a merely mechanical effect, and he continued to prescribe with a countenance unmoved, amid the twang of iron pestles, the squalling of children, the vociferations of the old women, and the moans of the young, sent out from beneath their hoods, calling each in order to his side, and attending to their wants in turn.

At a door in the railing was placed an able-bodied man, whose duty it was to admit the patients one by one, to see that no more should pass at a time, and to prevent them from loitering on their return.

"Mary Mulcahy !" cried the physician, reading from a ticket which had just been handed in.

An old woman hobbled on crutches to the door. Jerry Duhig (the able-bodied man before mentioned) opened to admit her. A rush was made by the mob of patients outside. The old woman was flung into the Doctor's arms, and Jerry himself was staggered from his balance. But, like a second Horatius Cocles, he arose in his anger, and confronted the invaders in the breach of which they had almost possessed themselves. The physician gave himself for a lost man when he saw the counterscarp thus furiously stormed. But Jerry stood his ground. He thrust right and left with his clenched fists, until he sent the crowd screaming and jostling back again without the door, with more cause of complaint than they had brought from home. As the old woman returned, Jerry, vexed at the outrage of which she had been the innocent occasion, caught her by the back of the neck, and sent her out at the door, crutches and all, at a rate more rapid than she had travelled since she was a young woman. She stumbled and fell among the crowd, exclaiming, in a tone between surprise and terror, "Oh, heaven forgive you your sins, you conthrairy man! Here's usage! Here's thratement!"

The Doctor proceeded.

"What's the matter with your head, my good man?"

"A little difference I had sir with a neighbour, an' he——"

"Broke it?"

"No, sir, only he hit up to me about my brother that was transported for night-walken', an' out o' that——"

"He broke your head?"

"No, sir, only I retorted on him, in regard of his own father that was hanged for cow stealin', an'——"

"He broke your head?"

"No, sir, only then you see, he made up to me and call't me a liar, an' with that I sthruick him, and with that he——"

"Broke your head?"

"Broke my head across."

"Aye, that's the point. One would think I was a justice of peace. What is it to me what you fought about? The broken head is all I want."

"Faix, then, I could spare it to your honour now, an' welcome."

"Here, take that prescription to the young gentleman

"They told me he put something in the apple, sir, to—to—make a fool of a person."

And, so saying, she hung her head, and drew the hood of her cloak around her face.

"Pooh! pooh!" said the Doctor, "is that all? Then you might be quite at peace, my dear, for he has not made a fool of you yet, at all events. Is this boy comfortable?"

"'Tis Harry Lenigan, sir, that keeps the Latin school near the Seven Churches, an' holds his place from Mr. Damer, of Glendearg."

"And have you any fortune yourself, my dear?"

"Fifteen pounds, my uncle left me, sir."

"A very nice thing. Well, my dear, take one of these pills every second night; and I would advise you generally, since you find it relieve your pain so much, to get into company with Harry, to be near him as much as you can conveniently; and come to me again when those pills are out. If Harry should call at your house any time between this and Shrovetide, I would advise you not to be out of the way. Do you hear?"

"I do, sir, long life to your honour."

"But, above all things, be sure you take the pills."

The girl promised to be careful, dropped a courtesy, and, heaving a gentle sigh, departed.

A loud knocking at the door now startled the physician.

"You're wantin' over, sir, in all haste," cried the harsh and stormy voice of Jerry Duhig, "here's Aaron Shepherd come to call you to see Mrs. Wilderming, that's taken suddenly ill."

This startling announcement occasioned an instantaneous bustle. The Doctor's horse was ordered to the door, and he hurried out of the house, leaving the crowd of patients storming at Jerry, and Jerry roaring at them like Dante's Cerberus.

————— who, thundering, stuns  
The spirits, that they for deafness wish in vain.

the blue coat that's rolling the pills in the corner. Well, my young girl, what's the matter with you, my dear? Jerry, mind the door!"

A sudden roar from without proved that Jerry took the hint.

The young patient just addressed was a timid and pretty creature of sixteen, who hesitated for a considerable time, and glanced shyly on each side, as if afraid of being overheard. Pitying her embarrassment, and interested by her figure, the Doctor took her into an inner room.

"Well, my dear," he said, in a kind tone, "what's the matter? Come, don't be afraid of me, now. I'm your friend, you know." And he patted her on the shoulder.

The girl only sighed, and looked down.

"Well, my love, what have you to tell me? Come, come, now, no nonsense."

"Something that's come over me, sir, I'm in dread."

"How is that?"

"A great pain I have on my heart, sir. There's a boy livin' over, near the Seven Churches, an' I'm afeerd he did'n't use me well."

"How so, my dear?"

"I don't know, sir. But ever since I met him I feel quite altered some way. I'm always lonesome, an' with a pain mostly on my heart, an' what makes me think 'tis he that done it to me is, because when I go to his mother's, an' I find him at home, from that minute the pain leaves me, an' I feel nothin' at all until I come away again."

"Oh, ho!" said the Doctor, "well, my dear, I'll order you something; but how is it you suppose that this lad didn't use you well, as you say? Come, now, no nonsense, you know."

The girl lifted the corner of a check apron to her eyes, and began to cry a little.

"Come now, my dear, don't keep me here all day. I can't cure you, if you won't tell, you know."

"To dance with him, I did, of a night, sir," she replied in a timid voice, and with a trembling lip, "an' when he was sittin' next me he gave me an apple, an' they tell me now that—"

Here she lifted her apron to her eyes and cried afresh.

"Well, well," said the Doctor, soothingly, "what then? Don't be afraid of me."

"They told me he put something in the apple, sir, to—  
to—make a fool of a person."

And, so saying, she hung her head, and drew the hood of her cloak around her face.

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——— who, thundering, stuns  
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## CHAPTER II.

ALIGHTING at the door of a neatly finished mansion, he was ushered at once into the sleeping-chamber of the sick lady. She lay on a bed, apparently insensible. The window was raised, and the muslin curtain thrown down, so as at the same time to admit the air and to exclude or soften the light. Near the head of the bed stood a beautiful young girl, crying bitterly, but silently. One or two attendants were preparing draughts in another part of the room and conversing under their breath.

The young lady gave her hand in silence to the physician. "Well, Miss Wilderming, any change since my last visit?" he asked in a whisper.

"A great change, for the worse, I fear, doctor," was the reply of the young lady.

And, at the same moment, they heard the patient murmuring some words aloud. The Doctor bent his head to listen.

"I'll see no more pleasant days at Roundwood," said the old lady; "my time is out. I'll be carried home to-morrow. My time is out."

The Doctor softly took her hand, and began to feel her pulse.

"'T will shortly stop," she murmured, "the number is told. Is my brother Damer come?"

"Not yet, ma'am," said the nurse.

"Then let him spare his speed, for I'll be cold before he sees me."

"You will see him soon, inamma," said Miss Wilderming, creeping to the bed's side, and laying her hand upon her mother's forehead.

"Ah, Esther, my darling."

"Are you better, mamma?"

"Must I leave my child alone?"

"Oh, you will soon be well."

"In heaven, I hope. Where's Richard Lacy?"



"He called to know how you were, mamma, but it was before——"

"Before the death-stroke. And he went away well-satisfied. He will be surprised to hear of my death. Your uncle, Esther, will take care of you when I am gone. I wish your father had staid after me. But we'll watch you, my darling, when you cannot see us."

"Mamma!—"

"Esther, I would die happy, if I had lived to see you married to Richard Lacy. He has some faults, but he loves you. Hear me, my child—I know you love him not, and I will exact no promise from you. But I leave you a mother's last injunction. Give Lacy an indulgent hearing; repress him not too harshly; be his friend, at least, for my sake, and hear me, and remember my words—The day that shall make you lastingly his will throw sunshine on my grave."

Perceiving that the young lady was unable to restrain her affliction at this speech, the doctor led her out of the room, and proceeded to examine into the condition of the patient. His diagnosis was wholly unfavourable.

He hinted as much to the nurse, and left the house, without again meeting Miss Wilderming. The morning verified his prediction, and Esther was left an orphan, under the guardianship of her uncle, Mr. Damer, of Glendearg. Why the parting injunction of her mother was delivered in a manner so solemn, why Esther should have refused to afford an instantaneous assent to a suit so highly sanctioned, why she should continue to dwell for another year beneath her orphaned roof, receiving the visits of Richard Lacy, without altering in any degree that manner which her parent had lamented, are questions which cannot be understood without some insight into the history of the parties.

Like all young Irishwomen of quick keen feelings and lively fancy, Esther Wilderming had got a strain of patriotic enthusiasm running underneath a girlish simplicity of manner. Her motives to this sympathy were not merely general. During the "troubles" of the year ninety-eight her family had suffered deeply for the sins of the rival parties, and it was no wonder that a theme to which her ears had been accustomed from her childhood should become firmly imbedded in her heart. What she felt strongly she expressed with energy;

## THE DETAILS.

THE first meeting of Esther and her lover, which shows so lovely in the young life, was not without something more of depth to a certain extent than was a first meeting.

ESTHER had attained her majority, and was now a young woman of a deeper hue of character.

She had been educated at the Lyceum seminary, at which she had been a student. Her father, Richard, was at the time a wealthy man, and a prominent member of the house of representatives. The meeting in which their acquaintance commenced was a meeting in which they were placed to take a walk in the park, and in the evening walks, to see a landscape, and in the morning along the hedge-rows and the old plantation, which is the characteristic either of a family or a country, and is a sign and a fruit wherever it is found. Esther thought his manner was a kind of tender sorrow, that gave to his expression an expressive and a mysterious charm. A young woman would have passed him by as an idle man, and would have said at first: a man of the world would have been but of a sensitive nature; and any man, a young man, would have recommended him to "leave his father's house and go into society. But the quick eye of the young Esther perceived him with an interest, and she was surprised that his superficial talent, which is a great advantage to the general intercourse with the world, was not the only thing that she saw. She fancied that he was the possessor of a reserve of talent and intense patriotism, and she was right.

They were seen so frequently, that a degree of acquaintance was sprung up between them.— Esther was of his age, and bowed when they met, and she was always so courteous to this courtesy, that the day when she was seen, whenever she missed the handsome

and chided, in her heart, the chilling forms of society which prevented her from reaching her kind little hand to the student, and expressing, in words, the interest which she felt in his condition.

The next morning he looked still worse, and he seemed to feel that he was so, for he had wrapped himself in a cloak, and his step was more rapid than usual. On the following day he did not appear, and two tedious months rolled away before Esther saw him more.

A meeting had been called in a small neighbouring town, for the purpose of petitioning the legislature on one of those interminable topics of popular dissension which were unhappily too abundant in the national polity of her native island. Weary of looking at the groups who hurried through the fields and along the distant road to the town, Esther drew the music-stool to her piano, and sung the following words to a well-known air:—

Once I had a true love,  
I loved him well, I loved him well ;  
But since he's found a new love,  
Alone I dwell, alone I dwell.

## I.

How oft we've wandered lonely,  
Through yon old glen, through yon old glen ;  
I was his treasure only,  
And true love then, and true love then ;  
But Mary's singing brought me  
To sigh all day, to sigh all day ;  
Oh, had my mother taught me  
To sing and play, to sing and play.  
Once I had, &c.

## II.

By lone Glencree at even  
I passed him late, I passed him late ;  
A glance just sidelong given  
Told all his fate, told all his fate ;  
His step no longer airy,  
His head it hung, his head it hung ;  
Ah, well I knew that Mary,  
She had a tongue, she had a tongue.  
Once I had, &c.

## III.

When spring is coming early,  
 And skies are blue, and skies are blue ;  
 And trees are budding fairly,  
 And corn is new, and corn is new ;  
 What clouds the sunny morrow  
 Of nature then, of nature then ?  
 And turns young hope to sorrow ?  
 Oh, fickle men ! oh, fickle men !

Once I had a true love,  
 I loved him well, I loved him well ;  
 But since he's found a new love,  
 Alone I dwell, alone I dwell.

Her song was interrupted by the entrance of some friends who came to offer her a seat to the meeting in their carriage. It was accepted immediately, and Esther with her friends soon after occupied a place in one of the galleries.

The crowd was great. There was first a speech from a very large man, and then another from a very little man, and then the very large man proposed a vote of thanks to a certain personage for drinking whiskey punch and bowing, which was seconded by the very little man. Esther had never before been present at a meeting of this description, and she felt her forehead glow a little at the sycophantic applause with which this proposition was received by the multitude, for she thought, in her simplicity, that political questions were questions of justice and honour, and not of plain self-interest.

But was there no one to oppose the utter degradation, the servility, of such a vote as this ! There was. A young man appeared upon the platform almost on the very instant when the chairman rose to put it to the meeting in the regular form. The latter immediately gave way, a hush ran through the assembly, the knot of orators upon the platform glanced at the stranger with inquiring eyes, the ladies eyed his handsome figure, and graceful, though hesitating, attitude, with that tender interest which is never refused by the female heart to the debutant untried, and there was one among them who turned pale and red, and trembled, and grew cold and faint at his appearance. It was Esther, for in this young orator she recognised her long lost solitary.

The great attention which he received from the meeting

seemed to depress the spirits of the young gentleman, and he glanced with an uncertain eye and a beating heart around the circle. The very tall orator, before mentioned, rolled himself round on his chair, and gave him a goodnatured, encouraging look. On all such occasions the great mass of the people are certain to act with kindness, but on a person constituted like young Riordan this had the most salutary effect. It was a stimulus he required, and he found it in a happy moment. Among the many faces that surrounded him, he thought he detected on one (it was that of Richard Lacy) the semblance of a sneering expression. In an instant he was at his ease. He opposed the motion with eloquence, with fervour, with erudition, and with success. The proposition was rejected by the multitude with acclamation. Young Riordan was declared to have spoken the best speech upon the platform on that day, it was copied in all the newspapers, and even attracted the comments of London editors, it was glanced at by an Irish member in the House of Commons, the speaker became the star of ——— during the season which ensued, and the loadstone and the cynosure of Esther's destiny.

She learned from her nurse the history of the young orator, and heard, with a feeling of unaccountable and almost oppressive pleasure, that the old woman Keleher had cared in like manner for the infancy of both. The connection which this circumstance established between them was slight and fanciful, and yet the idea that both had drawn from the same fountain their first draught of life, had slept in infancy on the same bosom, and shared the same attentions, and the same anxieties, afforded, to the gentle and affectionate heart of Esther, a pleasure which few could understand or sympathize with. She thought it gave a license for that tender interest which she already began to take in the fortunes of the young patriot. It established a species of relationship which Esther thought entitled him, on her part, to a kind of sisterly regard, and she longed for his friendship.

They became acquainted, and Esther's passion, for such it had already become, was met, and warmly answered. Francis Riordan was still more suddenly enchanted with the beautiful enthusiast than she with him.

A more intimate acquaintance showed Esther many faults

in her young hero. She found him shy, proud, and indifferent in general society, though he was all frankness and cheerfulness to her, and her friends. He had fallen into that fatal mistake which is so usual in minds where diffidence is joined with power, the erroneous idea that it was not his business to fit society, but the business of society to fit him, and that instead of adapting himself to the company in which he happened to be placed, he was entitled to treat it with disrespect and inattention in case it did not suit his own tone of mind. Thus, if it were not for the good sense of the lovely Esther, he would have spent his whole life in wandering through the world in search of a state of society which never did, nor ever will exist, as long as that world shall continue liable to the influence of the passions.

"Francis," said Esther to him one day, as he lay on the sofa, musing deeply, while she was painting velvet at the window, "will you tell me why you are so silent in company? Why did you not talk last night?"

"I don't know, Esther. One is not always in spirits."

"But you never talk so much to me as when you are sorrowful. I have remarked that of you long since." And while she spoke these chiding words, she disarmed them of all power of wounding even the most sensitive feeling, by bending her half shut eyes upon her lover, with a sweet and piercing smile.

"I can say any thing to you, my Esther. You can understand me, and feel with me. There is a line between our hearts," he continued affecting to describe it with his finger as he lay. "Our souls think the same language. There is a sympathy in our existence."

"You know me, Francis," said Esther shaking her head.

"Have we ever yet found a single word of explanation necessary in all our many discourses? Have my eyes ever spoken in Greek to you, or yours to me in unintelligible Celtic?"

"Francis, you know me well."

"To you I need not say, 'Esther, I spoke this in jest' 'that speech was used in irony' 'that allusion was political.' When I finish a story I do not find your face turned towards me looking for more, and marring the catastrophe with a 'Well, is that all?' There is an intelligence between us which I find not in my intercourse with others."

"Well, is that all?"

"Most impertinent Esther, it is not. I love not to be fretted and disturbed, by an useless collision with people from whom I can learn nothing, and who, nevertheless, can annoy me by their forwardness and pretension."

"There you are wrong, Francis, very wrong. There is nobody from whom a man of good sense and good humour may not learn something; and as to their disturbing you, why should you shun society for them? If they be silly, laugh away your spleen at their silliness, and if they be impertinent, why you need not be taught your remedy."

"I see that even you, Esther, understand the use of the subterfuge."

"Nay, if you will say that!" cried Esther, rising hastily and threatening him with one little hand, "you shall suffer for it. I will tell you what I think of your silence. You think yourself a genius and you despise your fellow-creatures."

Francis raised himself on his elbow, and gazed on her with a look of consciousness and alarm. "If to avoid be to despise," he began, but the lively girl ran towards him, dropped on a little footstool near the sofa, and interrupted him with a warming gesture.

"Hold, hold! You must make me no speeches with that serious face. Why do you avoid them, if you hold them in no scorn?"

"I will be candid, Esther. There are many among them that I think hardly worth the pains of pleasing."

"There you are very wrong again, Francis," said Esther with considerable warmth, "you are bound to love them all, the poor and rich, the mean and the noble, the dull, no less than the gifted, the vicious as well as the holy. The dullest man you meet does his utmost to please you, and you should do as much by him. What book is that near you with the leaf turned down?"

"A volume of Shakspeare."

"And what says that stage playing fellow? Does he not bid you use men better than they deserve, for the lesser their desert the greater is your merit in using them well?"

"On the score of Christianity, Esther, nay on the score of morals, I plead guilty, but I never set up for a good Christian you know."

THE RIVALS.

32

"That's a proper speech. And on the score of patriotism, what say you? You have set yourself up for a patriot, and you have set others down that thwarted you, and you hope to be a great man some day or another. And on the score of your own darling passion, the study of human nature, what say you? This is a kind of anatomy you cannot study without subjects. The more men you know, the more you'll know of their nature."

"But I have got one subject continually within my reach, and which I can dissect at will:" said Francis, laying his finger over his heart. "Did Jean Jacques Rousseau—"

"The wretch, the quack, the hypocrite, the knave, the coward! You make my blood tingle to my fingers' ends to hear him named."

"Well, well, he knew the heart, however," said Francis, smiling at her energy, "and did he find it necessary to expose himself to the dangers of collision with the mob of men? He laid his own heart bare, and found it a mirror of the whole species. Who knew more of the heart than Massillon? and yet every body was surprised where a quiet priest could have found such extensive opportunities of observation. But what says D'Alembert to that? Massillon painted all his splendid gallery of sinners and of saints, his magnificent portrait of the true Christian, his appalling picture of the infidel, his lukewarm devotee, his false penitent, his Mary Magdalen, his sensualist, all from the same original, all from the close study of his own single heart, and yet so true to the life that there breathes no soul in human form that may not find itself reflected in his pages, as in a faultless mirror."

"I read none of your papistical sermons," said Esther, "but friend D'Alembert, and the other eulogists of that French priest have overlooked one circumstance that might have lessened their wonder as to the source of his knowledge."

"And what was that, I pray you?"

"The Confessional."

"Esther," said Francis, after bending his eyes on her for a moment, in silence, "you have struck me dumb."

"You were dumb already. I had rather strike you talkative. If you hope to write a good book, or to be a great orator, you must talk with all, listen with all, and learn



to please all. Put Jean Jacques out of your head. What has all his moping availed him but to win the admiration of all the morbid sentimentalists in Europe? to crown him king of the day dreamers? But that stage-playing fellow near you used his eyes and ears as well as his imagination, and what has been his recompense? Universal empire."

"Hear! hear! hear!"

"Aye," said Esther, laughing, "you thought I had not the gift of speech? Nay, an thou'lt mouth, I'll rant as well as thou, though I am not standing on a papistical platform, with the whole jargon of Holinshed's chronicles in my head, and an ocean of frieze coats and felt hats around me. Ah, Francis, Francis, will you learn to prattle? As I love those eyes, I protest, I feel my heart ache within me when I see you silent in company, and hear that snake-eyed Lacy charming the ears of the whole circle. Ha! Have I hurt you?"

"To the heart," cried Francis, starting from the sofa, and covering his face with his hand.

"Dear Francis!——"

"Stand away! That viper!" he exclaimed, clenching his hand, and laying it against his forehead. "But we are both young yet."

"Francis, I am sure you are too wise and too generous to think of old slights, now."

"Too wise for what, Esther? Too wise to recollect that he has been through all my life my unprovoked and causeless enemy? If I were willing to forget it, he would not suffer me, for he crosses me every day with some new injury. I caught his sneering glance fixed on me at the meeting, though then he served me well. And yet these injuries appear so slight, that I would be ashamed to tell you one, and say it moved my passion. The cold and cautious wretch! After he has stung me by one of those insults which none can understand but he and I, I have lain in wait (forgive me, heaven!) a whole evening for an opportunity to pay him back again, but he has put me to shame with his cold courtesy and feigned unconsciousness. The fellow has talent, too, and sees through me as if I were a sheet of mica. If we do quarrel, and something tells me it will come to that with us some day or other, you will find that Richard Lacy will win the sympathies of all who hear of

the affair, while I shall reap a world of censure and perhaps of obloquy."

The last sentence was uttered in a mournful tone, and the eye of the speaker became fixed on vacancy, as if he were looking forward into an unhappy future. He did not again recover his spirits during the interview, and he took his leave with the air of one who expected some sorrowful adventure.

About this time one of those provincial insurrections broke out which were usual during the last few centuries, among the discontented peasantry. Arms were taken, contributions levied for ammunition, floggings and cardings inflicted on the part of the insurgents; while the usual preventives were adopted by the local government. The district was proclaimed, and some hundreds of the people were transported, but, strange to say, they still continued discontented.

At this time, too, young Riordan became less frequent in his visits to the Wildermings, and his manner to Esther was more absent and fitful, though not less devoted than before. She observed that he avoided all question of politics, and, if the condition of the peasantry were glanced at in his presence, he grew pale and agitated, and seemed impatient of the subject.

And about this time, likewise, it was, that Richard Lacy, after the usual course of attentions, and without the least ground on which to build his pretensions, made a formal proposal of marriage to Esther Wilderming, which that lady, without ceremony, declined.

Nevertheless a woman finds it hard to hate a man merely for being sensible of her merit. The real misery which Lacy evinced, at his rejection, touched her to the soul, and altered her opinion of his character in a very favourable manner. She saw that he loved her sincerely and disinterestedly, for his fortune and his birth might have entitled him to put forth his claims in circles far more brilliant than that in which they moved at ———. She wished that the Rivals might become friends, but this was a desire which it was easier to indulge than to accomplish.

On the All Saints' eve which followed, Esther Wilderming performed, for her amusement and under the instructions of her old nurse, one of those superstitious ceremonies which maidens use to discover their coming destiny in love. In

her instance, this was to be decided by the aspect which her lover should wear at their next meeting. If he met her with a smile, happiness was foreshown in their union, but if he stood before her with a mournful or an ill-tempered countenance, their lives were doomed to be clouded by many a heavy visitation.

The evening fell calm and sunny, and Esther sat in her mother's drawing-room, dressed in her demure silk habit, and expecting, not without a secret movement of superstitious anxiety, the arrival of her lover.

He had named a particular hour for his visit. It had passed away, and he came not. Another and another rolled away, before Esther heard his foot on the stairs, and when he came at last, she turned pettishly toward the window, determined to resent a negligence that had of late become rather customary with him.

But there is a preventing intelligence in evil news that has something in it of the supernatural. Her quick ear told her that the very sound of his footstep, on the landing, had something strange and startling, and her heart beat fearfully when the door handle turned in his grasp. Before she moved in her seat, he was already in the centre of the room. He had entered without removing his cloak, which was gathered close round him; his face was pale and moist, his hair damp and adhering to his forehead, and his eyes filled with an expression of mingled rage, disappointment, and perplexity.

"Esther!" he exclaimed, hurrying towards her, and catching her hand in his, "my own, dear Esther! I am come——"

"For what? What ails you, Francis? Why do you tremble? What do you fear?"

"Dear Esther!"

"Speak to me, Francis! I entreat you, speak! My heart will break if you continue silent. Lift up your head and speak!"

"I am ruined, Esther. I am compelled to leave you! I come to press your hand and say 'Be true to me!' Years may roll on, and you shall not see me, the face of the world may be changed before you hear the name of Francis mentioned; oceans shall roar, and mountains rise, between us, but yet be true! I leave the land that we both love so well, and I leave you, Esther, whom I have loved only less than



my country. I have striven to serve her, and have failed! That villain, Lacy, has betrayed my secret, and my life is already aimed at. I seek another land and another service, a land where I may yet render service to freedom without incurring the danger of universal ignominy; a land where, if her cause be dangerous, it is at least not shameful. But, Esther, my first love, my heart is with you. Trust in me as you would in the affection of your own mother. It is no praise in me to say, 'I will be true to you for ever, in life, in sorrow, in trouble, and in death.' It is no praise, for I could not be otherwise. But you—but you—" he added, trembling violently, while he pressed one hand upon his brow, and bent downwards in great agitation. "No! no! I will not fear it," said the young man, tossing his head back as if to shake off a depressing fancy. "Esther, remember my last words. Farewell—BE TRUE."

He pressed her for one moment in his arms, kissed her forehead, her lips, her hand, and was about to hurry from the room, when Esther recovered strength sufficient to detain him. Catching his cloak with both her hands, she hung upon him for some moments, panting heavily, and unable to articulate a single word. At length, gradually raising her head and looking upward into his eyes, with a pale and terrified countenance, she murmured, "Francis, what have you done?"

"Dear Esther," he replied "do not stay me now with the question. I am safe, quite safe, if you will let me go; but an hour lost now might be a life lost ere the morning."

In an instant Esther loosed her hold and stood erect before him. "You see," she said, with a painful smile, "a woman's love can be stronger than a woman's will. Run, run! but if you can, as you pass the threshold, tell me in two words what it is you fear so deeply."

"A rebel's death," said Francis quickly, and looking firmly on her at the same time, as if to intimate that he feared not to tell her that with which he would not try the strength of any other woman.

"Two words, indeed, two fearful ones," said Esther, while her face darkened for a moment and then lit up again, "For many a day, I have suspected this. And Lacy has detected and betrayed you? Ah, the cold knave!"

"Be true to me!"

"Indeed, Francis, I will. You are taking my happiness

with you wherever you go, and I think my country would no longer be my country if you should leave it. Oh, heaven, oh, heaven! And you are sure that Richard has betrayed you?"

"Do you start a kind doubt for him then?" said Francis, with some little impatience.

"You know, Francis, he is now the King's officer. Does he not hold a commission of the peace?"

"War, blight, and sickness light on him! he does—" exclaimed Francis, bursting out into an uncontrollable passion. "I could wish all the curses of Caliban upon him—but they are old men's weapons. Well, peace! our days are yet not numbered. We may meet yet."

"May heaven forbid it, while your hearts are thus disposed!" said Esther, in a tone of mingled reproach and tenderness. "But farewell, Francis," she added, extending one hand towards him, while she pressed the other hard upon her eyes—"I will not stay you now, you know my heart goes with you."

"Hark!"

"What hear you?"

"I heard,"—said Francis, standing motionless and elevating his hand, as if in the act of listening intently,—"*I heard a dead-bell ringing in the air. Again, again! Do you not hear it, Esther?*"

Esther heard nothing, but at that moment the recollection of the prophetic rite which she had performed flashed upon her mind, and made the blood run backward upon her heart. At the same instant, likewise, a heavy cloud which overhung the disk of the declining sun fell downward like a veil. before the dazzling orb, and caused an instantaneous twilight. To the eyes of Esther, whose imagination had been excited by the rite, and by the agitating nature of the scene which had just taken place, it seemed, at that moment, as if the face of her lover grew black, and scowled upon her. The darkness did not diminish during the remainder of their interview, which was very brief; and the weight was not removed from Esther's spirits. The circumstances just detailed, though purely accidental in themselves, took a deep hold of her imagination, and associated with the recollection of that parting a feeling of intense solemnity and gloom.

## THE RIVALS.

On that night, Richard Lacy was found severely wounded on a mountain side at Drumgoff, between Roundwood and Glendalough, or the Valley of the Seven Churches. He had been hurt he said, in a duel, by Francis Riordan ; but there were many who imagined that there was more generosity, than rigid truth, in this account of the transaction. Esther did not think so, but she pitied Lacy, and she pitied him still more, when she discovered, or received good reason to believe, that Francis was wholly in error in his suspicion of Lacy's treachery.

Francis was one of those unhappy young men who were kidnapped into the South American service by the scandalous devices of the agents of that government in those islands. His first letters to Esther showed that he had participated in the fatigues, the privations, the disappointments, and the heart-sicknesses of that legion of unfortunates, whose miserable fate is still spoken of with feelings of undiminished indignation by many a childless parent in their native land. At length, the tidings came that Francis had paid, within the tropics, that debt to loyalty which he had refused to render in the island of his birth.

And now, years had gone by, and Esther's parents were in their grave, and Esther herself, all changed in heart and frame, was living under the guardianship of her maternal uncle Damer, in his wild and lonely residence of Glendearg. The assiduities of Richard Lacy, joined to the recollection of her mother's dying wishes, together with a feeling of gratitude for many services which he had rendered to her friends, and, assisted by the importunities of the Damers, prevailed on Esther to give her consent to a marriage in which however her affections had little interest. She liked her present suitor better than before, and she endeavoured to persuade herself that it was possible she might love him, but her nature was bereaved of the power ; her breast was empty ; her heart was buried in the grave of her first love.

## CHAPTER III.

ABOUT midnight, Mr. Damer, a low sized, sleek, smooth-featured, elderly gentleman, was seated in the dining room of his own house, in a certain hilly and heathy county in the neighbourhood of Dublin. Before him, on a rose-wood table, varnished like the surface of a mirror, stood decanters of cote roti and hermitage, the contents of which appeared to have been brought somewhat low in the course of the evening. The chair in which he sat was one of those splendid inventions by which the character of our age has been immortalized, and which will enable us to divide the admiration of posterity with the founders of the Parthenon and the constructors of the Babylonian gardens. It was one of those elastic cushions for which, not the tenants of the air, but the air itself, has been laid under tribute. The magnificently gilded covers of a quarto edition of Henry's Bible lay on his right hand, reflecting the light of four wax candles, which were supported in candlesticks of massive silver, richly carved. A solid and elegant side-board was loaded with all the splendours of the family plate and glass. On a secretaire, at a little distance from the table, were placed a quantity of books in plain dark binding, and stamped on the covers with the impress of the Society for the diffusion of Christian Knowledge. In a corner, less brilliantly illumined, the eye of the curious observer might detect a parcel of small pamphlets, stitched in blue covers, and bearing on their title pages the various denominations of "The Dairyman's Daughter," "The Conversion of Timothy Delany from the Errors of the Church of Rome," "The Lough Derg Pilgrim, a Tale," "Father Clement, a Roman Catholic Story," and many other productions of a similar tendency.

There was something in the air of the whole apartment that was calculated to impress the beholder with an instantaneous conviction of the wealth, the self-contentedness, and the piety of the owner. It had little of mere fashion, but a great deal of that species of luxury which in England is

denominated comfort, and in Ireland, falls little short of magnificence. The person of the proprietor was entirely in character, or, in the cant of connoisseurs, in *keeping* with his possessions. His hair was short and sleek, his head round as a bullet, his face plump and peachy, his eyes meek and sanctimonious, with a little spark of earthly fire, (the result of some harmless and habitual self-indulgence) gleaming unsteadily through the pupil, like the *pæta* of the Venus Erycina. His legs, shining in black silk, were crossed, so as to expose the calf to the influence of a cheerful coal-fire, and a bunch of fine gold seals reposed on an incipient paunch. No collar, starched and impudent, obscured the blushing rotundity of his beardless jaws; a muslin cravat, of the purest white, alone encircled his short neck, for he had the good taste to sit in full dress to his wine. Thus cushioned on the zephyrs, not in the poetical, but the practical, sense of the phrase, sipping his *cote roti*, and glancing occasionally, while the conversation proceeded, at the columns of a Dublin daily paper, sat Mr. Kirwan Damer, the owner of this mansion, and of the adjoining estate of Glendearg, in the county above intimated.

To heighten the domestic picture, in a ounger, on the opposite side of the fire-place, sat Mrs. Damer, as well conditioned as her husband, dressed like him in black, with a trim cap of white muslin, surrounding her fair and full and rather languid countenance. The lady too was reading.

But that we have already suffered the names to escape us, the reader might suppose that we were describing a wealthy rector, and his helpmate, in their handsome parlour at the Glebe.\* He would be however totally in error.—Mr. Damer was merely an Irish country gentleman of our own time. The Flath has vanished, the Canfinny is forgotten, the Chiefs of their race are no more regarded, the duellist, the drunkard, the libertine, and the gambler, have

\* Sir John Davis pleads hard for the incumbents of his own time. and urges the propriety of giving them the land of the Erenachs, when the statute of chauntries should come into force in Ireland. "Albeit" he writes to the Earl of Salisbury, "there be in every parish a parson and vicar, yet both their livings together are not sufficient for one honest man." In this particular at least, Ireland has improved, for even a rogue might contrive to live well upon a vicarage in our own day.



all been exiled from the pale of Irish society, or compelled to wear their vices in a veil. A class of men has succeeded to which even those who have an interest in its vilification must accord a preference. Those who wish to know the character of that class should know the Damer.

On the other side of the table, near Mrs. Damer, sat a gentleman of a manner and appearance very different from that of Mr. Damer. He was tall and well proportioned, dressed very plainly, with a red, laughing countenance, and two large black eyes which seemed to be always rambling in search of amusement.

"Well, Damer," said Mr. Leonard, the gentleman just described, "I totally disagree with you, in every one of your plans. I think you will do no service whatever to the peasantry, I think you do not understand them sufficiently. [Mr. Damer smiled.] I think though they are ignorant and naked (poor fellows!) and Papists to boot, they have as fair a chance of going to heaven as the best of ourselves; that is my idea, poor devils: even though they do break out now and then, human nature is human nature, and my idea is that all the funds and subscriptions in the world will not get half a dozen more souls into heaven than were on their way before. Half a dozen is the outside."

"And would not the salvation of one," said Mr. Damer, lifting the cote roti to his lips, "be worth the whole cost, and all the exertions of the Society together?"

"Be worth sixty thousand a year?"

"Sixty million!"

"Besides the bickerings and heartburnings that have broken up the frame of society in our country, the division of families, the sundering of early attachments, the fomentation of civil disunion, and the diffusion of all uncharitableness in private life? My idea is, that for the one soul we save by this business, we lose fifty."

"For shame, Tom," said Mrs. Damer, "you are growing worse and worse every day."

"I don't pretend to any great sanctity," said Leonard.—"You, my fair and fat and sanctimonious sister, know me a long time, and know me to be a blunt plain fellow, that thinks he does his duty when he takes care of his neighbour's body, and leaves his soul between him and his Creator. There is the difference between us. Damer is "

honest a fellow as any body, but his charity all evaporates in smoke. If I find a poor fellow starving on my estate, why, (heaven forgive me!) I think I do my duty when I send him a leg of mutton, and make him an abatement, while Damer smothers him with books and Bibles and I don't know what. Here's my idea. Give the people bread, and they'll find out piety themselves; make them prosperous, and you may be sure they will grow virtuous without much labour. But hunger and cold are the sorriest Martexts in the world."

"As to want of charity," said Mr. Damer, "one circumstance may show you on what side that is to be found. You remember last Sunday, my love?"

Mrs. Damer raised her hands and eyes with an air of gentle horror.

"We were going to church," continued Damer, "in an open carriage, when we met the Archbishop's family on their return from Cove, within a few perches of the Romish chapel. The people were all assembled, waiting for mass, outside the chapel door, with their eyes fixed on the two carriages. You know it is my misfortune to be very easily confused by any circumstance that places me in a conspicuous situation; and it happened, at this moment, that I was in the act of speaking to the ladies, when a young ragged scoundrel, among the crowd, set them all in a roar of laughter, by shouting out some Irish words. What was that expression, my dear?"

"Bawgoon thae heeña, my love."

"Yes, bawgoon thae heeña, meaning 'Bacon-on-Friday,' a sobriquet which the benighted and ungrateful scoundrels have conferred, on the converts whom we have withdrawn from among them, and in return for all my exertions for their welfare. I don't wonder you should laugh. Bacon-on-Friday, indeed! I never was more ashamed in my life. I'm not astonished you should laugh. Take your wine, sir."

"Bawgoon thae heeña!" cried Leonard, in a convulsion of laughter; "Oh, the young villain!"

"Take your wine, sir."

"Bawgoon thae heeña!"

"You need'nt repeat it so often, Leonard, however."

"Oh, the young scoundrel. And what did the ladies say?"

"They could'nt help laughing when they understood what the expression meant."

"The villain! Bawgoon thae heeña!"

"Come, come, Leonard, take your wine, and have done with it."

"Well, I will. Poor fellows! They will have their joke to the last."

"The benighted creatures!"

"Ah, now, come, Damer, keep your cant for the preachers, and talk like a man. It is very easy for you and me to sit down by our coal fires, and groan over the sins and ignorance of the poor, starving, shivering cottagers, while we drink our champagne and hermitage; but heaven forgive us, I'm afraid that we'll fare otherwise in the other world, for all our hypocrisy, while these poor devils will be reading the Bible in paradise."

"Fie, fie, Leonard, you grow more profane."

"Do you know what John Wesley said?"

"Any thing that escaped the lips of that saint must be comfortable."

"Very well. He said it was impossible for a Christian to expect to ride in a coach on earth, and go to heaven afterwards. Pick comfort out of that if you can."

"The road to heaven, my dear brother," said Mrs. Damer—

"Is a straight and narrow one, my darling. No thoroughfare for coaches. An, what nonsense! You and I live in such houses as this, and rail at the poor peasantry in their cottages. We censure their intemperance, while we sip our *maraschino*; we shudder at their turbulence, while we loll in a coach on our elastic cushions. We shut the gate of heaven against those who tread their way thither among thorns and affliction, and we dream that it will be open to ourselves, after we have sighed, and moaned, and prayed, and believed our way through all the sensual indulgences of earth, and stand on the portals of the other world, like prize-Christians, ready fattened for the celestial market."

"Profane, profane!"

"Oh, Tom!"

"Oh, Nelly! I had rather be profane than hypocritical. That's my idea. Ah, it is an easy matter to be a saint, whe

one has an income of four thousand a year, with a mansion like this on one's estate. It is easy to sing psalms when you have them sent down with the newest music from Clementi, or Goulding and D'Almaine, and can sing them to one of Broadwood's best grand pianos with all the additional keys, or a triple action pedal harp. It is easy to pray out of a pair of richly gilt Morocco covers, in a handsome pew, with silk cushions under one's knees, and the thermometer at summer heat. It is not difficult to be punctual at church, in defiance of distance and of weather, when one can go there in a close carriage and four; nor to meet round the fire at evening and read the Bible, and shudder at the poor deluded peasant, who is shivering, meanwhile, all alone, by his cold cottage hearth, and offering up the idolatrous devotion that moves our horror. But the great Lord of nature has his eye upon us, and upon that peasant at the same moment. He weighs his sufferings and his temptations against his errors. He sees his agonies, he hears his sighs, and he looks upon the tears of his children. And He sees our luxury, our self-sufficiency, and our presumption. Heaven save us from the sin of the Pharisee! The poor—poor peasant that works from dawn to dusk for eight-pence, in cold and heat, in shower and sunshine, to share that eight-pence with the whole population of his little cabin, while you and I sit here by our fire-side and judge him over our wine! Well, well!" continued the speaker, elevating his hands and shaking them above his head, "I hope we'll all be saved, one time or another; come, fill your glass, and let us talk of something else."

"Talk on, talk on, you began by saying that you disproved of all my plans," said Mr. Damer, with the calm and complacent smile of one who listens good-humouredly and half-amused to suggestions which he has no idea of condescending to adopt.

"True, true. Well, about this marriage. I think, (you know I always tell my mind freely,) I think you are going to sacrifice your ward."

"Oh, Tom!"

"Oh, Nelly! I do not like that Lacy, that black-browed, pale-cheeked and ambitious plotter. I think you would have done much more wisely if you had wedded her some years ago to poor young Riordan. That's my idea."

"The dissolute young villain!" exclaimed Damer appearing for the first time to be really moved by the observations of his brother-in-law. "On this subject, only. I will take the liberty of echoing your own words. Fill your glass, and let us talk of something else."

"Poor Riordan! He was a manly, fine young fellow. and worth five hundred such after-dinner martinets as Richard Lacy. My good wishes will always follow him wherever he goes. He had all the firmness and ready thought of five and twenty before he was eighteen."

"And all that firmness and promptitude did but enable him to abuse the confidence of friends, to pour the poison of disobedience into the heart of a gentle and innocent girl, to quarrel with his own family, and to quit his country as an adventurer."

"As a patriot, if you please. An adventurer in the cause of Columbia, the cause of freedom."

"The cause of green feathers and epaulettes. If he be dead, as rumour tells us he is, let us say nothing more, nor better, of him than that he lived for love, and died for a green jacket."

"Dead or alive, let joy be with him in his exile. Ah, Damer, Damer, you should have married him to little Esther, and kept him home in Wicklow."

"He is better where he is," returned Damer. "He is better in his grave; he lived long enough for his friends and for himself. What good could be looked for at the hands of a baffled murderer?"

"A murderer!"

"A baffled one, I said; yes, he had the atrocity to make an attempt upon the life of Lacy with his own hand."

"Poh, I know what you allude to. And do you believe that story?"

"It did not want proof."

"I wouldn't hang a dog upon such evidence. It was a duel, man. It happened merely to be an honest one, fought in hot blood and without waiting for seconds. Does Lacy dare to say that it was otherwise?"

"No, no; Lacy is a man of honour, and he has always acquitted Riordan; but the circumstances speak for themselves. Lacy found bleeding on the mountain side, near Drummoff, and Riordan absconding, as soon as he had



long unused to action. He turned away his head, and sipped his wine.

"He was worthy of it, whatever love he met," continued Mrs. Keleher. "He had a warm heart in his breast, he had the eye of a hawk, and the tongue of an angel in his head. If he burned my house, and then asked me to take him in my old arms, I'd do it. He had ever and always a kind of mournful look in his eyes, and a tone in his voice that would coax Europe. He's dead, they tell me, now, and buried far away from home. It is the course of nature, that the living should forget the dead, and do their duty by each other. Poor Master Francis met but little love or kindness while he was able to return it; and who can warm to him now, when his own heart is cold?"

"What was the cause of his being so unfortunate, Mrs. Keleher?" exclaimed Leonard, who was impatient to bring the old lady to the point.

"The poor lad was overlooked, when he was a child."

"Overlooked! How was that?"

"I'll tell you, sir. There are some people that have an eye in their head that it is not good for 'em to look upon any thing, and if it so happened that they'd look upon a child, as it were, or a cow, or a horse, or a ha'p'orth at all, and to say, 'That's a fine child,' or, 'That's a fine cow,' without saying 'God bless it,' afther, the child would be so far overlooked, and never would see a day's luck from that to his death's hour."

"And who overlooked young Riordan?"

"There's the question, sir. Who did it? I had him in my arms of an evenin' at the doore, abroad, an' I singin' for myself, an' dandlin' the little darling up an' down, an' he crowin' an' laughin' greatly. It was a fine calm evenin', an' the lake as smooth as a looking glass, when I seen a woman reelin' a hank o' thread, and goin' by the doore an' fixin' an eye upon masther Francis. 'That's a fine child,' says she, 'you have in your arms.' Well, hardly she said the word, when I heard the kettle boilin' over within upon the fire, an' I run in to take it up, without even waitin' to make the woman say 'God bless it!' an' 'm sure, when I come out again to call afther her, there was no account to be had o' the lady, high or low."

"And so the child was overlooked?" said Mr. Leonard.  
 "The child was overlooked," returned the housekeeper :  
 "an' I don't know was it fancy o' me, but from that hour I  
 thought I saw the same mournful look in his eyes that he  
 had till the day he parted me. I never seen two (an' sure I  
 ought to know 'em, afther nursin' the both of 'em) I never  
 seen two that were so unlike in themselves, an' loved so  
 dearly as himself an' the young darlin' above stairs, Miss  
 Esther."

"Come, come," said Mr. Damer, with a warning voice.

"Oh, 'tis no thraison what I say, sure, when 'tis among  
 ourselves," continued the old woman. "I said, before,  
 they loved as I never seen man and woman love, an' still  
 they were as conthrairy in their ways as two could be. Miss  
 Esther, though bein' of a methodish family, (forgive us all  
 our sins!) was the merriest child I think I ever laid my two  
 eyes on, just as she was always, an' as she is this day, heart-  
 broken as she is."

"What!"

"With the sickness, I mean; with the dint o' the delicacy,  
 inwardly, sure, I said already it is the coorse o' nature for  
 the living to forget the dead, an' I wish no man happier than  
 Richard Lacy, now that the turf is green above my own  
 poor lad. She was ever an' always laughin' an' jokin' poor  
 Masther Frank about his sorrowful ways. An' still she had  
 great feelin's, the craither! She cried a power when she  
 heerd of his death."

"How did she spend this evening?" asked Mrs. Damer.

"The same as the day, then, ma'am, between laughin'  
 (though there was only a little o' that indeed) an' shiverin',  
 an' faintin,' as it were, but sure you were with her yourself,  
 ma'am. She had no fit since you saw her. Ah, Masther.  
 take it from me, she never had the same heart from the day  
 that Masther Francis flitted."

"An' tell me now, Mrs. Keleher," said Leonard, in a  
 loud voice, "how came you to nurse Miss Wilderming?"

"How come I to nurse her? Why then, I'll tell you that.  
 To be goin' I was, through the village of Roundwood of a  
 time, very soon afther I berrin' my first child, an' I called in  
 to a friend in the place, a lone woman that kep a little shop  
 o' medicines. 'T is where she was when I called, was with  
 Mrs. Wilderming, the methodish Lady, and she told me w'

she came in that there was a place for me as nurse, if I choose to take it in the town. Faix, never say it again, says I. I'm sure I will so, an' glad to get it. So I got the child the next morning, and brought her with me to the same place where I nursed Masther Francis, where my husband's people were buried, an' where I laid his own old bones when it was the will of heaven to part us."

"Well, Mrs. Keleher, will you go up stairs, and tell Miss Esther, that her uncle wishes to speak to her before she goes to rest? He wishes her to sign a little paper, while her uncle Leonard is here to witness it."

The old woman replied to this speech with a significant look and a shake of the head, after which she turned on her heel, and hobbled towards the room-door.

"And Mither Lacy, Ma'am, will I send him in-to you?"

"He will find out the way himself, I dare say," returned Mrs. Damer. "but you may bid Aaron go and seek him."

Mrs. Keleher departed; and Mr. Damer, throwing open a rose-wood desk, displayed a document purporting to contain the articles of marriage between Richard Lacy, Esq., of Roundwood, and Esther Wilderming, of Glendearg, niece and ward of the comfortable looking gentleman who was now so busy on her behalf.

"Don't move the candles, my love," said Mrs. Damer, "there is light enough. Let there be as little form as possible, or you will terrify the poor little timid thing out of her wits."

"Nevertheless, Nell," said her husband, with a smile, "you stood in a very good light yourself, the day you and I set our hands and seals to the same sort of parchment."

"Ah, my love, the case was very different. You were my chosen and my only one."

Mr. Damer would have kissed his wife, for this speech, but that the connubial action was prevented by the opening of the door, and the entrance of Mr. Richard Lacy.

He was a low sized man, with a lean, hard and bloodless face, eyes full opened, and cold in their expression, hair drawn back on all sides, so as to conceal no part of a countenance whose extent could not admit of much remark; hands little, yellow, and bony; lips, thin and anxious in their character, and a manner that, while it



showed a perfect intimacy with good society, was yet too artificial to deserve the praise of elegance.

He glanced at the open desk, and his appearance, while he took his seat near Mrs. Damer, was not free from agitation. Leonard gazed at him with an unliking eye. He whispered something, in a low and broken voice, about the troubled look of the sky, and then, fixing his eyes upon the doorway, seemed to watch for the entrance of the fair ward with the eye of a real lover.

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## CHAPTER V.

THIS night had been appointed for the formal signing of the marriage articles. The witnesses, as we have said, were ready, the desk was thrown open, the candles were moved to a suitable distance, and every eye was bent upon the parlour door. It opened at length, and a figure entered very unlike that of the lovely sectarian for whose approach the eyes of Lacy longed as for the light. It was that of a tall, muscular, middle aged man, dressed in a brown suit, with grizzled hair brushed sleekly upon his brow, a face, of a deep yellow tinge, sown thick with freckles, and eyes which had a curious mixture of active thought and of solemnity in their expression.

"Well, Aaron," said Mr. Damer, "what of your mistress?"

"She is not coming," said the servant. "She wishes to speak with you in the drawing room."

"With me?" asked Lacy, starting from his chair.

Aaron replied to this question by a stare of calm surprise, and then stalked after Mr. Damer out of the parlour.

That gentleman found his niece standing in a niche formed by one of the lower windows, with a white veil drawn round her person, her arms folded, with one hand laid upon her throat, and her person as motionless as a statue. The window curtains were drawn back, and the thin moonlight, falling on her pale face and light gray drapery, gave something of a spiritual expression to the whole figure.

"Well, Esther, pet, why do you keep us waiting?" said Damer, patting his niece affectionately on the shoulder, "Richard is below this hour."

"Uncle," replied Esther, making an effort at her usual liveliness of manner, "you must read the Bible, and learn to bear with me. My valour is oozing out at my finger ends, as the time approaches, and I fear you will find me out to be an arrant coward before long."

"Fie, fie! you are trembling."

"Have you discovered it? Nay then, take the honest truth at once, uncle, my heart is failing me."

"What should you fear?"

"I have enough, I think, to make a maiden's heart beat rapidly, sir. I fear, first, a room full of staring guests—"

"But there are none—" said Damer, interrupting her.

"A pair of wax candles, shining in one's eyes, and lighting one up like a player, an open desk, a scroll of parchment, and the eyes of a doubting bridegroom."

"You are a strange girl."

"You have named my name, as sure as there is a moon in heaven. Adam himself could have done no better. But, indeed, indeed, uncle," she continued, suddenly assuming a deep and serious tone, and lifting her hands towards him, as if in the act of supplication, "my mind is changing on this marriage."

"Changing, Esther?"

"Changing," echoed the beautiful girl, with a musing look, while she tossed her head significantly several times.

"Every thing around me, every sight, every sound, seems to warn me against it. My dreams are full of threats and warning terrors. I cannot tell you why, but I feel as if this marriage were to bring on some terrible misfortune."

"Oh, Esther, fie! This is trifling with us all," said Damer, with some impatience.

Esther bent down her head to hide the burst of tears which flowed from her at this speech. "Trifling?" she repeated, "may the friends of Esther never know such mirth! Uncle, I am very ill; I am growing worse and worse every hour. I don't know what is the matter, but I feel as if I had some dreadful fortune hanging over me. I fear I have not long to live."

Mr. Damer became quite fretted at what he thought the

hypochondriasm of this speech, and reproved his niece with considerable warmth. "While there was any reasonable ground for your holding back," he said "while there was any hope that your own early wishes might be realized, I never once pressed you upon this point. Did I ever for an instant put you to pain on the behalf of Lacy, while the promotion of his interests could have injured those of any other person?"

"Indeed, uncle Damer, you never did."

"And is there any thing, then, so very unreasonable in my now entreating that you would no longer delay the fulfilment of a promise freely made?"

"You are always kind and good."

"Besides," continued Mr. Damer, "I hope my Esther will be generous enough to remember that there are others whose feelings are not less intimately affected by this negotiation than her own. You would not put poor Lacy to the agony of such a disappointment, after so many years of steady faith and constancy?"

Esther remained for a few moments silent, with her face buried between her hands, and then raising her person and making an effort to appear determined, she placed her arm within that of Mr. Damer. It is well, thought that gentleman within his own mind; the usual maidenly prologue is concluded, and we may shortly hope to have the play begin.

He led her, still trembling, from the room. They reached the hall, upon which the door of the dining room opened. Here the courage of Esther once more failed her. Her uncle felt her hang more heavily upon his arm, and her breath came thick and short, as if she were threatened with some hysterical affection. At that instant, the door opened, and Mrs. Damer made her appearance. The rigid character of this lady had always impressed her niece with a certain degree of awe, and that sentiment came now most opportunely to check the deep emotion which already began to agitate her limbs, and features. Supported, at either side, by her relatives, she once more summoned resolution enough to approach the dreaded door, when some sudden and new occasion made her start and turn her head in the attitude of one who listens intently.

"Who said that?" she asked, in a hurried whisper.

"That?—What, Esther?" inquired her uncle.

"Somebody spoke behind me, somebody said 'Be true!' Did you not hear? I ~~did~~, as plainly as I hear my own voice now."

"It could not be, my love," said Mrs. Damer, "the doors are all closed, and the hall is empty."

"I ~~heard~~ the words," repeated Esther, panting heavily, "as plainly as I heard you now. Oh, heaven support me!"

"Fie, Esther, fie!"

"I have no choice!" continued Esther, looking upward fixedly, and seeming to address her speech to heaven. "If you hear and see and blame me, Francis, remember what I suffered for your sake. I do it for the best. O, my good guardian, look on me to-night! If, in this step I am about to take, I act at all from selfish or unworthy motives; if my heart be false; if I seek my own good in any thing I do to-night, I do not ask thee to hold up thine arm! I do not shun the anger that is gathering on my destiny! But my heart is silent. My heart accuses me of nothing evil in my intention, and I fear not your displeasure since you know it is my duty and not my will that draws me to this sacrifice."

Somewhat strengthened and relieved by this appeal, Esther proceeded with her friends to the parlour, and made her appearance there with less of confusion than she had anticipated. She gave her hand, with that cordial understanding which connects good natured hearts together, to Mr. Leonard, bent her head slightly, and with as much kindness as she could assume, to Lacy, and then moved quickly to the desk on which the marriage articles were laid.

The agitation of the bridegroom while Esther took the pen, and prepared with a trembling hand to affix her name to the document, was scarcely less remarkable than her own. His conduct was that of one who is upon the brink of some intense and long sought happiness, and who fears that some sudden chance may yet interpose to snatch the blessing from within his reach, even when he has already opened his arms for its reception. But Esther, suffering Mr. Damer to guide her hand, had already made the dreaded sign which bound their destinies together, and his was safe from henceforth. He ceased to tremble, and Leonard, who watched him with the eye of one but little enamoured of his character, observed a flash of ecstasy, that almost approached a

degree of triumph break from his eyes, when all the necessary signatures had been affixed to the legal document.

Without much conversation, the company separated, after the business for which they had assembled had been discharged. The following day was appointed for the marriage which was intended to be as private as possible. The gentlemen left the house, and, soon after their departure, Esther was borne to her room in an alarming state of weakness. Tremblings and fits of syncope succeeded, and kept the family during the remainder of the night in a state of intense anxiety and agitation.

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## CHAPTER VI.

AARON, the servant already mentioned, was in the act of crossing the hall, after making an anxious inquiry into the condition of his beloved young mistress, and receiving for the first time the satisfactory intelligence that she had fallen into a deep, and apparently refreshing, sleep.

"Poor craither!" he said, "poor darlin'! the light will lave my eyes if you get no better in the mornin'! Well, friend Davy," he added, addressing a handsome countryman who just then made his appearance in the passage leading to the servants' hall. "Where are you going, now?"

"To Glendalough, Misther Aarum," returned the stranger, gathering around him the folds of his large frieze coat. "How's the missiz?"

"Thank you, finely. You mustn't stir yet?"

"Oh, that I mightn't if I can stop a minute, 'tis a'most one, an' I have a long road before me."

"You must come back, and take a little nourishment again' the way. Take off your coat and come."

With some decent persuasion, Davy Lenigan, ("for that was his name," as old story-books have it,) was prevailed upon to return and take his seat by the blazing fire in the servants' hall. It was a comfortable apartment, floored with brick, with a deal table extending nearly the whole length.

and flanked by two forms of the same material. A pair of arm-chairs, intended as seats of honour for the coachman and the cook, were placed on each side the fire, and, those respected functionaries being now absent, Davy Lenigan was invited to take possession of that position which was usually occupied by the Phaeton of Glendearg.

Here he sat for some moments, while old Aaron hurried out of the room, to procure materials for whiskey punch, which was what he meant to intimate by the word "nourishment."

"Ah, Mrs. Keleher," said Davy, observing the nurse making some arrangements at the end of the room, "so this is the way old times are forgotten above stairs!"

"Ah, howl your tongue now, Davy," said the old woman, "there's *raison* in all things."

"Ah," continued Davy, with a sad countenance, "its little Misther Riordan, my poor young masther, ever thought she'd turn on him that way in his grave."

"E'howl your tongue, now, Davy."

"Oh, Masther Francis, they hadn't my heart in their buzzom when they forgot you that way, an' the colour you wore the day you died. Only four years gone, what four? 'tishn't, nor passin' three an' a half, an' there she is goin' to put the very decaiver in your place that was the cause o' your destruction an' your banishment! The very decaiver! 'm sure I hard him myself, the day he parted her, talkin' an' he havin' her hand betune the two of his, an' he sayin' his last word, 'Be thrue!' Look, Mrs. Keleher, there's no use in talkin', but it would kill the Danes to hear him sayin' that word, that day! An' now to think of her marryin' another man, an' takin' to Lacy of all the world! Dear knows, my heart is broke from the thoughts of it. An' sure what hurt if it was for one of his own *profession*\* he suffered, but for a methodish! Ah, dear, dear, dear!"

"Howl, again Davy; Aaron will hear you."

"Ayeh, let me alone. Let 'em all rise out of it, for love, afther that. An' tishn't that, but the talk she used to have herself, about the counthry, an' the boys! Ah, Masther Frank! Masther Frank! Dear knows I wouldn't wonder if he showed himself to her of a night on the 'count of it."

"Eyeh!" Mrs. Keleher exclaimed with a faint shriek.

\* Religion.

"Dear knows, I wouldn't. Three year an' a half! Sure it takes seven years to make a man dead in law, an' it seems there's only half the time wantin' to make him dead in love."

"Well, well, achree, the dead is dead, an' the livin' is livin', let us take care of ourselves an' not to be jedgin' any one. Howl your tongue, now, here's Aaron comin'."

Davy complied, with a kind of groan, and in a few minutes, he and the elderly sectarian were seated alone, by the fire-side, with a capacious jug of whiskey punch steaming luxuriously between them.

In addition to the feeling of honest hospitality, Aaron Shepherd had a motive for detaining Davy. It had been the old methodist's misfortune, during his time of service with Esther's father, to hear one of those controversial argumentations by which the mind of Ireland, and of England also, was agitated about this period. The consequence of this circumstance was, that Aaron was presently seized with an irresistible passion for polemics, and dreamed of nothing less than making converts on his own account. He had long since cast a hungry eye upon Davy, and longed for a good opportunity of awaking him to a sense of his condition. In this, however, it was necessary to employ some skill, for Davy was as wary as a plover, and being conscious of his own want of theological information, while he was fully determined not to be convinced by any thing Aaron could urge, he avoided all occasion of controversy with that person. Yet he could not altogether decline a plain challenge, for Davy had a brother who was an instructor of youth; he kept a school at Glendalough, where young people of both sexes were instructed in the arts of reading, writing, grammar, book-keeping, arithmetic, &c. at the cheap rate of half a crown a quarter, while those who aspired to classical information, in which also Mr. Henry Lenigan was capable of affording some rudimental information, paid the enormous sum of two guineas a year. He passed in his neighbourhood for a man of "great manners," his literary education having taught him to assume a certain suavity of bearing, and occasionally a certain euphuism of discourse which impressed his neighbours with a high idea of his erudition. Nothing astonished Aaron more than that an argument which appeared to himself as convincing as a self-evi-

dent proposition, should produce so little effect on Davy, while the latter felt no difficulty so great as that of finding reasons for not admitting these conclusions of the sectarian which he was unable to answer. His common resource, when pressed very hard, was to take the matter up in a personal light, and

—prove his doctrine orthodox  
By apostolic blows and knocks.

But, even in this species of logic, he was still no adequate match for the sectarian, whose Irish blood could be easily made to rise above the zero of his Christian theory, and suggest some tremendous carnal execution.

After the hearts of both had been softened by one half hour's steady application to the punch-jug, Aaron suddenly broke, out of a conversation on general subjects, into the following speech:

"Look you hether, David Lenigen! You are a dacent credible youth, an' I love you. Your people an' my people lived in the same town, an' dealt together for teas, an' groceries, an' things, an' I have every raison to love and like you."

"Its thrue for you, Misther Aaron, we wor ould neighbours, surely."

"An' its for that raison, Davy, I wish you well, an' I'd wish I had the power to put your father's child in a palace this blessed night."

"I never misdoubted your good will, indeed, Misther Aaron."

"Don't, Davy, don't, for the world. An' still, Davy," Aaron continued, setting down his tumbler with a solemn face, "if I could put you in a palace, where would be the gain? The palaces of this world, Davy, are like houses of snow—"

Davy groaned internally.

"—Which melt away in the first thaw, an' lave us could an' defenceless, but the palaces of light are the only palaces that's worth a Christian's while to look for."

"I won't gainsay *that*," said Davy, with emphasis.

"You couldn't, Davy, if you would. You couldn't gainsay the——"



He was going to say the Bible; but recollecting that Davy was not privileged to qualify himself for a controversy on this subject, he stopped short, with a smile of pity and contemptuous forbearance. Davy perceived the sneer, and found it impossible to evade the contest any longer.

"Look hether, Misther Aaron," he began. "They may say this and that of the Bible, and of the best way to heaven, but I'll tell you what it is. I seen a man of a day that read more books than you or I ever saw in our lives, an' I heerd that man say that there was no use in talkin', but whether a man was a Roman, a Protestant, a Methodish, or a Quaker, the best way in the world for gettin' into heaven was just—to go there, simply."

"Well, friend Davy, an' do you b'lieve him?"

"I does!" said Davy, stoutly, "I think that there's no persuasion \* goin' but a part of 'em will go to heaven, some time."

"What *all*, Davy?"

"Iss, all—barrin' it was, may be, the Turks or the Arabians. Ayeh, what talk it is! Listen hether. Wor you ever at Glendalough?"

"I was," replied Aaron, with a contemptuous smile.

"And did you see the Seven Churches?"

"I did."

"The round tower, and the Cathedral, an' St. Kavin's Kitchen?"

Aaron lowered his head in dignified assent.

"Well, then, if you did, listen hether. Do you mind me now, Misther Aaron? The masther abroad has the heighth o' that table o' Bibles of all sorts and sizes, and he thinks he's the first that's bringing 'em into Ireland. But harken hether! Do you think the saints, an' the great people long ago, that built them churches, that stone roof, and that round tower, that all the masons in Europe couldn't do the likes now, if they were at it from this till mornin', do you think them saints didn't know anythin' o' the scripthurs?"

Aaron was silent for a moment.

"Do you think," continued Davy, pressing his question, "that them saints are burnin' in hell this day?"

"I judge nobody, but——"

\* Religion.

"There whar," cried Davy in triumph, "and you talk to me o' Bibles and things! Ayeh, Misther Aaron, take it from me, I'm t' be readin' or writin', we'll ever get into heaven, can't be doin' our duty properly."

"Hold you there!" cried Aaron, "there's the point, you know. What is your duty, Davy?"

"My duty," said Davy, a little puzzled, "is, as I may say, to do my duty, as it were, by all manner o' people, high an' low, gentle an' simple; that's my maxim, an' that's what I go by ever."

"Well, an' will I tell you a plain truth now, Davy, as a friend?"

"You're freely welcome."

"Why then I will. You know no more of your duty, Davy Lenigan, than that cat on the stool. You belong to a church that leads you about like poor Blind Buff, with a hankitcher on your eyes, an' a gag on your mouth, an' most commonly 'tis where it leads you is to the gallows-foot, to edify your friends with a lamentation. Did you ever see a methodist hung?"

"If I didn't," said Davy warmly, "I seen methodishes that deserved it. The pride an' the conceit o' ye hates the world. Ye're just the dandy Christhens above all others! Ayeh what talks! Ye think it is a standin' collar and a low crowned hat that 'll take ye into heaven. I don't know my juty! E' howl your tongue, you foolish man! I suppose if I axed the same question o' you, you'd tell me your juty was to comb your hair straight, an' spake through your nose, an' to keep your knees bent in walkin', an' your crubeens turned in, an' to wear a shovel of a hat upon your pole, and a round cut coat. That's the whole o' the methodishes catechism. All the defference betune us is, that I let the priest lead me to heaven his own way, an' you give your sowl to the tailor. It's thrue for Thady Ryan, the poet westwards, what he says o' ye, in his ballad o' the Recantation of Father Hannan, an' he spakin' o' the Catholic Church:—

Through Europe (says he) did resound  
The laws she did expound—  
Why did you (says he) attempt to forsake her?  
Her banners she displayed  
In triumph night an' day,  
She's shuprior (says he) to Swaddler or Quaker.

"Mind, I don't say any thing again' the swaddlers for indushterin'. They're strict an' credible people, surely, in that line. But as for the religion—"

Here Aaron could hold no longer—

"You poor despicable papist!" he began, "it is like you' an' your people, to be always ignorant an' presumptuous; I will prove to you—"

"Howl a minute!" cried Davy, "ignorant an' presumptuous! Before I hear another word from you now, afther that, I must know what raison you have for sayin' it. Tell me this," he added, rising from his chair, and confronting the sectarian with an attitude of imposing majesty; "if you're such a great fellow entirely, can you calculate the aiclipece o' the moon?"

This was a thunderstroke. Aaron, so far from being able to answer Davy's question in the affirmative, did not even find it intelligible. He winced, and shrunk from the learned scrutiny of Davy's glance, but his confusion betrayed him.

"You can't!" cried Davy, in great triumph: "An' you talk to me of ignorance? Poh!" And snapping his fingers in the face of his opponent, with a shrill exclamation of scorn, he turned round upon his heel and resumed his seat.

The controversy was here interrupted by strange sounds above stairs. In the room directly over their heads, they heard the noise of many feet hurrying to and fro, as if some accident had taken place, and, in a few minutes, the old nurse was seen hobbling into the hall with symptoms of wild alarm and confusion on her countenance.

"Aaron Shepherd! Aaron Shepherd," she exclaimed, wringing her hands with an air of grief and impatience! "run, run for the Docthor, as fast as ever you can lay leg to ground! The young missiz is in a fit, an' I'm afeerd she's dyin'."

"Dyin', woman?"

"Dyin'; away with you, Aaron, or he never 'ill overtake her alive! Oh, vo' there I hear 'em again above stairs! Run, Aaron, run for the bare life!"

This was the signal for general consternation. In one minute Aaron and his low hat were speeding through the moonshine in one direction, while Davy Lenigan took the wild mountain road which led to Glendalough, not displeased

at the opportunity of escape from his polemical opponent, and little afflicted at the condition of Esther; for her infidelity to his master had shaken, considerably, the interest she possessed in his affections.

## CHAPTER VII.

The most striking characteristic of the Wicklow scenery is that of intense, though not oppressive, loneliness. The road which our polemic pursued, after leaving the mansion of Glendearg, was a wild and broken track, winding amid a wilderness of mountain heath and granite. Sometimes a stream, hurrying downward through the masses of rock that made the desert horrid, broke suddenly upon his path, foaming and glittering in the moonlight, and making a dreary sound in the midnight solitude. Sometimes the distant barking of a dog augmented the sense of extreme loneliness which the scene occasioned, by the slight suggestion of a contrast which it afforded. Sometimes a gust of wind swept down between the fissures of the hills, and hurrying along the valley side, sunk down and whist again, ~~the~~ wail that had something in it of a supernatural effect. The beautiful terrors of the scene were, however, all lost on Davy.

A cloud had stolen across the moon, when he descended that rugged part of the road which leads downward upon the lake of Luggela. He stepped out upon a rock, which overlooks the valley on the north-western side, and endeavoured, in the dim light, to gather in the outline of the scene beneath him! This enchanting little region, like all the lake scenery of Wicklow, owes its principal fascination to the effect of contrast which is produced on the beholder's mind by the dreary wildness of the barren mountain road by which it is approached. While our pedestrian stood upon the rock, the veil was suddenly withdrawn from the disk of the "full blown" moon, and a flood of tender light was poured upon the scene, clothing the cliffs, the lake, the trees, and the whole coup d'œil in a mantle of bluish silver.

He saw, beneath him, embosomed among the brown hills, a little valley full of beauty, full of varied loveliness, full of character, and of romantic interest. On his right was a deep glen, rugged with masses of granite, and intersected by a small stream which supplied the basin of the lake, and whose origin was concealed amid the windings of the barren defile. Following the course of this stream, the eye soon beheld it creeping out from among the rocks, gliding with many a snake-like winding along a green and cultivated champaign, and mingling into the lake with so gentle a current that the profound repose of its gleaming surface was unbroken by a single curl. Beneath him, on his left, in a nook of this sequestered valley, and commanding the beautiful plain before described, stood a mansion in the pointed style of architecture ; and here the scene was enriched and humanized by plantations, pleasure grounds, garden plats, and other luxurious incidents, which gave a softening character of leisure to the retreat. Farther to his left, lay the calm expanse of water, from which the scene derives its name, and which occupied an area between three lofty mountains, each of which descended suddenly upon the very borders of the lake, and presented a variety of shore which was wonderful in a scene so limited. On one side appeared a tumbling cliff, composed of innumerable loose masses of granite, piled together to the height of a thousand feet, without a single trace of vegetation ; farther on, the waters kissed the foot of a hill, that was clothed, from the summit to the very verge of the lake, in a mantle of the freshest verdure : farther on still, the shores were shadowed by overhanging woods of pine and beech, and before the circuit of the basin had been made, the waters were found rolling in their tiny wavelets of crystal, over a level sandy beach, composed of triturated granite, and forming the border of the lawn already mentioned. The effect of the whole picture was heightened, at this moment, by the peculiar light, which softened down the rougher features of the scene, and gave a gentle and sparkling brilliancy to those parts that were distinguished by their beauty and refinement. Over half the surface of the lake, the gigantic shadow of Carigamanne-mountain (the granite cliff before described) was flung by the declining moon, with a sharp distinctness of outline, veiling half the waters in the deepest shade, while

the remainder mimicked the vault of the star-lit heaven above within a plain of bright and streaky silver.

The poor pedestrian remained, gazing long upon this scene, for he remembered the time when his young master, Francis Riordan, and himself, were accustomed to spend whole summer days upon the lake, paddling luxuriously along the mountain sides, or standing out in the centre and looking for trout. He remembered the time when he sat resting on his oars in the bow, while the slight and beautiful boy was wont to lie back on the stern seats, for many minutes together, gazing on the glassy water, and humming over that enchanting air,\* the character of which is so exquisitely adapted to the scene from which it takes its name.

On a sudden, the ears of Davy were greeted by a strain of music so singular, so novel in its character, and yet so sweet, that it bound him to the spot, in an ecstasy of surprise and admiration. It seemed like a concert of many instruments, and yet it was little louder in its tones than the murmuring of a hive of summer bees. Sometimes it swelled out into a strain of wailing harmony like the moan of an Eolian harp, and sometimes faded away into

A sound so fine that nothing lived  
'Tween it and silence.

And then a rich masculine voice, improved into an almost magical sweetness by the loneliness of the place, took up the following melody, which was executed with a skill that told of continental accomplishment :

I.

Hark ! hark ! the soft bugle sounds over the wood,  
And thrills in the silence of even ;  
Till faint and more faint, in the far solitude,  
It dies on the portals of heaven !  
But echo springs up from her home in the rock,  
And seizes the perishing strain ;  
And sends the gay challenge with shadowy mock  
From mountain to mountain again,  
And again !  
From mountain to mountain again.

\* The air of Luggela, to which Moore has adapted that perfection of lyric melody, commencing

"No, not more welcome the fairy numbers," &c.

## II.

Oh, thus let my love, like a sound of delight,  
 Be around thee while shines the glad day,  
 And leave thee, unpay'd, in the silence of night,  
 And die like sweet music away.  
 While hope, with her warm light, thy glancing eye fills;  
 Oh, say, "Like that echoing strain,  
 Though the sound of his love has died over the hills,  
 It will waken in heaven again,"  
 And again!  
 It will waken in heaven again.

The song ceased, and the listener could hear the words, "Again, and again!" floating off and fainting in the bosom of the distant valleys.

In a few minutes a small boat emerged from that part of the lake which was darkened by the shadow of the mountain, and gliding rapidly over the star-spangled abyss that lay between, buried its light keel in the sandy beach, above described; two men leaped on the shore, and Davy thought he saw, from the headdress of one, a plume of coloured feathers waving in the moonlight. The night was so calm, that he could hear the voices of both with perfect distinctness. Perceiving that he of the plume was about to take the road to Roundwood, Davy hurried forward on his own track, measuring his speed so as that he might encounter the stranger as nearly as possible at the point on the heath where the two roads joined.

In this he was successful. The stranger, in answer to Davy's courteous greeting, touched his hat lightly with his finger, and, folding his cloak around him, continued his journey in silence. When they had reached that turn in the road at which, by a single step, the traveller may shut out from his view the delicious valley above described, the stranger, who seemed to be well acquainted with the scenery turned suddenly round, and gazed for a long time, without the least sound or motion upon the moonlit scene. At length, seeming to gather his arms more closely upon his breast, and bending his head low, he strode forward, at a more rapid pace, and soon overtook Davy, who was loitering a few paces in advance.

"Do you go to Roundwood, friend?" asked the stranger, in what Davy called an "Englified" accent.

## THE RIVALS.

THIS WAS THE SPEECH WHICH, like the first speech addressed to a silent post, led to Davy's silence, and left him free to become as impetuous and communicative as he pleased.

"A little beyond it, please your honour," he said, touching his hat, "as far as Glendalough."

"Is that the way to the Seven Churches, then?"

"No, sir, it's just hard by the barrack of Drumgoff, where the parson keeps a little school. I was over among the gentlemen a while at Master Damer's of Glendearg, getting him to put in a good word for me with the Archbishop, in regard to the lease of my little place, over."

His manner was so in the expectation that the stranger would not be worth to sustain his share of the conversation, that he never resumed speech.

"Glendearg is Glendearg, sir," Davy, added, "nothing but natural matrimony ever an' always."

Even this seemed to awaken the stranger's curiosity, and the two men again both were silent.

"There goes that, this is a lonesome road," was Davy's expression respecting a confidential intercourse. "I wouldn't be so cross the mountains to Roundwood alone to-night, not that I ever saw any thing uglier than myself, thank heaven, but people says a dale about sperrits, not very bright. Will you take it as an offence, sir, now, if I ask you about one question?"

"That will depend altogether, my good friend, upon the nature of the question itself."

"Sure, sir, sure. Well, it's what I was going to say was that I know a family from Dublin that come here last year, and of all the world, I never heard any thing more like the tone of their voice than what your honour's is. The Airman was a fine, likely family indeed, and 'tis what I thought when I heard your honour's, was that may be, says I to one of the young Master Nortons I have there, and sure enough, says I, 'tis Master George, that went out with the soldiers, and I see the green feather stickin' up in his hat, as he comes on the road."

"My word then," said the stranger, "is not unfamiliar to me."

"I don't know then, no," said Davy, "I have a feelin' greatly to feel when I hear you talkin', as I may say."



"And the best conjecture you can make is, that I am young Mr. Norton of Dublin!"

"I'm thinkin' so, sir."

"I hope I may not find all my old friends in Ireland so forgetful, and yet there are many there by whom I do not feel anxious to be recollected. Your name is David Lenigan?"

"It is, abo' board!"

"Were you ever in service?"

"Never but the once't when I was coortin' Gracey Guerin."

"And would you know," said the stranger in a hollow voice, standing still himself, and causing David also to do so, by laying a finger against his shoulder. "Would you know your master if you saw him again?"

At this question, David drew back with a secret misgiving at the heart, and a cold creeping of the skin, such as is occasioned by the extremest horror of which human nature is capable. He gazed fearfully on the tall figure that stood before him, and as the moonshine fell upon his worn and sallow countenance and large watery eyes, a terrific recognition began to awake within his heart. The stranger, meanwhile, remained standing at his full height, his head thrown back, as if to invite inquiry, one foot advanced a little, and one worn hand gathering the drapery of his capacious war-cloak around his handsome person.

"Aye!" he said, after a long pause: "I have triumphed! Once more I tread the land I trod in childhood; once more, with an unsullied name, I walk the soil that hides the ashes of my fathers! I left it poor, I return wealthy; I left it in shame for my species, in sorrow for the name of man, I stand to gaze upon it now, proud of that name, and proud that I belong to such a race of beings. I look upon these hills, the lakes, the streams, the woods, and that pale moon that lights their loveliness, and I say, Shine on, for we are worthy of your light; bloom on, for we are worthy of your beauties! I have seen, at last, that sight for which my boyish heart had yearned almost to bursting. I have seen a people rising in their anger, and challenging the rights that nature gave them. I have lifted my hand with theirs towards the free heaven, and struck with them for liberty. I have seen them prosper, I have seen tyranny struck

dust; and now my heart is satisfied. Men now may turn their swords into ploughshares and pruning hooks, for they have done enough to show that the old spirit still lives upon the earth, and to give a Grecian lesson to posterity."

At the close of this speech, Davy had just recovered sufficient presence of mind to stretch out his hands towards the stranger, and exclaim, in a hoarse and broken whisper, while his teeth chattered, and his limbs shook with fear, "Oh, Masther Francis, is it you?"

"My poor fellow," said the stranger, still, in the same loud and excited tone: "I am indeed your master, Francis Riordan."

The faithful servant remained for a considerable time without the power of speech. "We thought you were dead, sir," he gasped forth at length.

"There was a time when I would have rejoiced to give occasion to such a rumour," said Riordan: "but what a brilliant fortune I would then have lost! To see the cause succeed to which I had devoted my life and labour, to come back once more in health and honour to my native land, and even, before my youth had fled, to return with all my youthful hopes accomplished."

"But, Masther Francis, ar'nt you afeerd, for all?"

"Afeard! of what?"

Davy cast a glance over each shoulder, alternately, as if to be assured that they stood alone in the wilderness, and then said, "Why then, nothin', sir, only of that ould business about the boys you know."

Francis burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. "Nay, nay," said he, "I can't think there is great danger of my finding people's memories so very acute. My enemies must not have sharper recollections than my friends."

"Ayeh, then, I declare I wouldn't trust Richard Lacy for forgettin'."

"Nor I, nor I, if it were his interest any longer to remember."

"O then, O then, sure, Masther, 'tis it that is his intherest, an' nothin' else. O dear! O dear, dear! Oh, Esther Wilderming! the heavens look down on you this blessed night!"

The moment he had said these words, the stranger seemed on a sudden to have lost a foot of his customary stature.

His proud and soldier-like bearing was altered in an instant. He walked off the road and sat down, for some moments, on a rock which lay near, evidently greatly affected, but not hiding his face, nor by any avoidable action suffering his agitation to appear.

"Come hither!" he said to his attendant, after a pause of painful silence, "what do you say of Esther?"

"Oh, then, Masther Francis, I declare I don't like to say any thing about it to you."

"Speak on!" said Riordan, with a portentous calmness in his accent.

"You're sick and weary now, sir, after your journey."

"Speak on, speak on," repeated Riordan in the same tone.

"Come on to Roundwood, Masther, an' I'll tell you, when you're well an' hearty in the mornin'. Dear knows, a sleep would be better to you now than news like this."

"Speak, sir!" cried Francis, in a voice of sudden passion, springing to his feet, and shaking his clenched hand in the face of his servant, "speak, sir, or I will strike you to the earth! You hint a horrid ruin in my ear, and bid me wait your pleasure for the telling; you fling me on a rack, and bid me sleep! What of Miss Wilderming?"

"She is——" Davy began—

"Dead!" cried the soldier, observing him hesitate.

"Not dead, sir, no——"

"Not dead, thank heaven! But ill?"

"Wisha faix, that's not it, sir, neither."

"What then?" He looked for some moments closely into David's face, and said, with a vexed laugh: "She is not married, sure?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"No!" cried Riordan, starting back, with a burst of enthusiastic confidence. "My Esther is not false! In all my toils, in all my sufferings, in all my trials, dangers, and afflictions, that base, ungenerous doubt has never crossed my mind, even for an instant. My breast is full of confidence towards her. Oh, I am as sure of Esther's love as I am of my own truth, in her regard, of your fidelity, of Lacy's hatred!"

He paused, as if in expectation of Davy's speech, but the

latter continued silent, looking fixedly on the ground, and giving utterance occasionally to a deep moan.

"What is it that you fear to tell me, Lenigan?" continued the young patriot. "why do you hesitate, and moan, and look downwards? Out with it, man, whatever be the event. One thing, at any rate, I cannot fear, and that is Esther Wilderming's unkindness. I never will look upon her face with a sad heart, unless I should live to see her in her coffin."

"Why, then, since you say 'coffin,' Masther," said Davy, "I declare I'd rather see her in her coffin, than where she is to be, in Masther Lacy's house."

"Then where?" said Riordan, stepping back, and speaking in a whisper between his teeth.

"Oh, then, in Lacy's house!"

"What have you said?" cried Riordan, leaning with both hands on David's shoulder and speaking in a low voice.

"Nay, speak not!—do you think I can bear that?"

"Oh, Masther Frank."

"Listen, or I will tread you into powder! Answer each question: I shall ask you briefly, quickly, and most truly, sir, as I will stop your speech for ever. Where is Esther?"

"Over at Glendearg."

"And well?"

"As pretty well."

"Married," he paused, and panted heavily, "married, or not?"

"Not married, yet."

"What then? She is contracted?"

"Yes."

"To whom?"

"To Richard Lacy."

"Swore and death!" the young man cried aloud, flung Lenigan from him, and stamping furiously against the ground.

He stood for some minutes in an attitude of rigid agony, with both hands pressed upon his forehead, and the fingers worked in his hair, as if with the intention of tearing it up.

"That is the way to be," he said, at last, "no error here. Is it possible that she has given herself away to my enemy?"

"No, then, and to no other."

"Oh, you have said enough! My heart will burst—Stand back! Oh, what a rival! ah, stand aside for I am losing breath—Oh, peaceful moon, what constancy is this! Come hither, sir, let me lean on your shoulder."

"Wisha, dear knows—"

"Stand still. Fie, fie, my heart is beating like a boy's. I never dreamed this might be possible. I am very feverish. Oh, shame! shame! shame!"

"Dear knows, sir!"

"How she deceived me, and how I loved her! I would have staked my life upon her truth—I would have died for her, and she forgets me! Married to Lacy! Why, of all the names on earth, should she have chosen that one to curse me with? Oh, if the memories of our early love, that very bank, that stream, that quiet grove, the lonely twilight and the young fresh dawn, that had so often lighted us in our accustomed walks—if all these recollections had not power to hold her to her ancient faith, why need she, at the least, have struck the blow so deeply! I told her, at our parting, that I could not change, and I spoke the truth. I have been tempted, too. Wealthy, and beautiful, and high-born was the being that put my true affections to the trial. I was poor, then, and friendless, and I went up all alone to the house top, in the calm and burning noontide, to look to the east and think of her whom I had left in our own distant island. The sky was clear and still, the woods were silent, a stream plashed at a little distance, and I thought of former times. I lifted my hands to heaven, and I said, No!—let my fate be gloomy as it may, let me die young, and in a foreign land, but never will I meditate falsehood to my country, or to my love. I kept my truth, and this is my reward!"

"Oh, then, sir," said Davy, "I have that notion o' the women, that if they wished to prove throe itself, they couldn't keep from rovin' and to do their besht."

"But she has found her punishment even in her crime. Married to Richard Lacy! I could not curse her more deeply than to wish Lacy's heart in the breast of him who was to govern her destiny. Ah, fie upon her falsehood! I am a fool to trouble myself about it.—Davy!"

"Well, master?"

"When is the marriage to take place?"

"This week, sir, as I hear."

"Ah, shame upon her! And at Glendearg?"

"Providen' she is better before then."

"What, is she ill, then? What's the matter? Speak, sir! Yet, what is it to me? I'll me nothing of it. From this time forward, I disclaim all interest in that cold, fickle creature. I have done with her for ever. What! she is not then suffered to carry it through with unruffled plumes and a heart entirely free. Well, well, though she is worthless, I am sorry to hear this."

"Ah, masther, you're too hard upon her."

"Do you think so, David? You are a faithful fellow."

"'Tis unknown, sir, what coaxin' an' arguefyin' they had at her, over at Glendearg, to make her say the word that she'd marry Lacy."

"Ha! do you know this?"

"To be sure, I do. Didn't she remain shut up in her house for as good as four years a'most, without seein' a crather, hardly, until we heerd of your death?"

"Aye, I forget; you spoke of some such rumour. And Esther heard of this?"

"The world wide heard of it. Sure it was printed in the papers all over Ireland. 'Tis afther that, sure, Lacy come coortin' of her agin, an' she wouldn't have any thing to say to him for a long while, only the death of her mother, an' Mr. Damer's arguefyin', an' every thing, forced her to it at last, an' she got the sickness on the head of it."

"Forced her!" cried Riordan, in a tone of extreme surprise.

"Iss—Misther Damer."

"And does he think," the young man exclaimed, with sudden vehemence, "does he imagine that he can complete this sacrifice while she has got a friend on earth to save her? I am in error here. Her parents dead, her guardian cold and cruel, her hope of my return for ever destroyed, and her own health decayed. I have wronged, and I will save her; I will snatch her from him at the altar's foot, and when I have placed her at my side again, let me see the man who dares to come between us. Hold, Davy, stop one moment. You must return to Glendearg, and take from me a note to Esther Wilderming. To-night I sleep in Roundwood; to-morrow, some business takes me to Enniskerry, but I will be

with you at Glendalough, to hear your answer, in the evening, and that must guide us in our future conduct."

He wrote with a pencil a short note, which he folded and placed in the hands of his attendant, bidding him use the needful secrecy in its delivery.

"I'll give it to Mrs. Keleher," said Davy, "for, dear knows, I'm in no hurry at all to have any talk with Mither Aaron."

"What, is poor Aaron Shepherd living still?"

"Oh, thef'tis he that is, an' 'tis I that has raison to know it."

"Poor Aaron!"

"Dear knows, I think that man would bother the world, convartin' 'em. I declare to my heart what I ait an' dhrink at that house doesn't do me good, I'm so smothered from bibles an' thracts of all kinds. Arguefyin', arguefyin', for ever. Erra, sure if a man had a head as long as my arm. 'twould set him to have an answer ready for every question they'd ax him that way. But I'm promised a copy o' the Fifty Raisons next week, an' indeed when I get it I'll give Aaron his due. Well, mather Frank, good night, sir, an' the heavens bless an' direct you. I'll go no farther now, as I'm to return to Glendearg."

"Good night, good fellow. I will remember your honesty and your attachment, David, when I am once more at peace."

"Oh, then, don't speak of it, mather Frank. 'Tis enough for me to see you well an' hearty, an' more than I expected to see, sure. Well, well, only to think o' this! Alive and here in Ireland afther all! That I may never die in sin, but it bates out all the fables that ever was wrote."

He turned away, and, as he descended through the rocks, Francis could hear him, at a long distance, in the calm moonlight, singing the following lines of a controversial ballad:—

When woful heresy  
And infidelity  
Combined for to raise disconsolation,  
You forsook that holy church  
That would not lave you in the lurch:  
And publicly denied your ordination.

THE RIVALS.

Your name it will appear  
Through Ireland far and near,  
In Limerick, in Cork and Dungannon,  
In Belfast and Dublin town  
Your conduct will be shown  
As they'll talk o' the revolted Father Hannau.

Young Riordan remained for several minutes gazing on the moonlit desert, by which he was surrounded, and deluging his mind to the romantic nature of the scene, and of the circumstances under which he now beheld it, after years of suffering and of exile.

"Alas, and here in Ireland!" he exclaimed, repeating the words of his old follower—"Even so, my drooping country. Here I these times in sorrow and in fear, and now I come again in joy and safety, to challenge the fulfilment of my youthful dreams. Ye hills that seemed to my infant fancy the boundaries of earth itself; ye barren wilds, that my untried eye could find as blooming as the gardens of Arima; ye lakes and streams, into which I have so often gazed, and longed to dive into the mirrored heaven beneath; ye fresh summer winds, that even now waken in my mind a thousand sudden sweet remembrances; ye rocks, trees, valleys, all ye shapes and hues that constitute my home, I bid you from my heart! There's not a bell blooms on the desert's reach of these, my native mountains, but my heart has a particular fondness. There's not a rock frowns down from these gloomy summits but leaves the luxuries of the tropics behind-hand in my estimation. Oh! and shall ye still greet me with the same young and constant smile? shall ye still offer to my sense the same unaltered sights and sounds; shall the winds blow, the waters run, the mountains and the rocks rebuke the morning with the same voice that cheered my infancy, and all remain unchanged, except as I will not think it. Now, from this time forward, I will anticipate an evil. My life has been a life of sorrow and pain, and now I never more will cease to hope. My sorrows may gather dense, as night itself, above my head, but I never will believe that it bears thunder. I must succeed; I must be gay and happy; I will bid my sorrows to the winds, and welcome joy with a full heart to hold it."



After this enthusiastic speech, the high-spirited young soldier threw his cloak around his glowing frame, and hurried off in the direction of his native village. Young nerves, young blood, young feelings and young hopes, combined to keep his spirits in that buoyant state to which his fancy had excited them, and he trod along the mountain path as if it were entirely by his own free election that he preferred the earth to air.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

THE school-house, at Glendalough, was situated near the romantic river which flows between the wild scenery of Drumgoff and the Seven Churches. It was a low, stone building, indifferently thatched; the whole interior consisting of one oblong room, floored with clay, and lighted by two or three windows, the panes of which were patched with old copy-books, or altogether supplanted by school-slates. The walls had once been plastered and whitewashed, but now partook of that appearance of dilapidation which characterized the whole building. In many places, which yet remained uninjured, the malign spirit of Satire (a demon for whom the court is not too high, nor the cottage too humble) had developed itself in sundry amusing and ingenious devices. Here, with the end of a burnt stick was traced the hideous outline of a human profile, professing to be a likeness of "Tom Guerin," and here might be seen the "woful lamentation, and dying declaration, of Neddy Mulcahy," while that worthy dangled in effigy from a gallows overhead. In some instances, indeed, the village Hogarth, with peculiar hardihood, seemed to have sketched in a slight hit at "the Masther," the formidable Mr. Lenigan himself. Along each wall were placed a row of large stones, the one intended to furnish seats for the boys, the other for the girls, the decorum of Mr. Lenigan's establishment requiring that they should be kept apart, on ordinary occasions, for Mr. Lenigan, it should be understood, had not been favoured with any Pestalozzian light. The only chair, in the whole

establishment, was that which was usually occupied by Mr. Lenigan himself, and a table appeared to be a luxury of which they were either ignorant or wholly regardless.\*

On the morning after the conversation detailed in the last chapter, Mr. Lenigan was rather later than his usual hour in taking possession of the chair above alluded to. The sun was mounting swiftly up the heavens. The rows of stones, before described, were already occupied, and the babble of a hundred voices, like the sound of a bee-hive, filled the house. Now and then, a school boy, in frieze coat and corduroy trowsers, with an ink-bottle dangling at his breast, a copy-book, slate, Voster, and "reading-book," under one arm, and a sod of turf under the other, dropped in, and took his place upon the next unoccupied stone. A great boy, with a huge slate in his arms, stood in the centre of the apartment, making a list of all those who were guilty of any indecorum in the absence of "the Masther." Near the door, was a blazing turf fire, which the sharp autumnal winds already rendered agreeable. In a corner behind the door lay a heap of fuel, formed by the contributions of all the scholars, each being obliged to bring one sod of turf every day, and each having the privilege of sitting by the fire while his own sod was burning. Those who failed to pay their tribute of fuel sat cold and shivering the whole day long at the farther end of the room, huddling together their bare and frost bitten toes, and casting a longing, envious eye toward the peristyle of well-marbled shins that surrounded the fire.

Full in the influence of the cherishing flame, was placed the hay-bottomed chair that supported the person of Mr. Henry Lenigan, when that great man presided in person in his rural seminary. On his right, lay a close bush of hazel, of astonishing size, the emblem of his authority and the instrument of castigation. Near this was a wooden "sthiro-

\* A traveller in Ireland who is acquainted with the ancient Chronicles of the country, must be struck by the resemblance between the manners of the ancient and modern Irish in their mode of education. In that translation of Stanihurst, which Holingshed admits into his collection, we find the following passage: "In their schools they grovel upon couches of straw, their books at their noses, themselves lie flat prostrate, and so they chant out with a loud voice their lessons by piecemeal, repeating two or three words thirty or forty times together." The system of mnemonics, described in the last sentence, is still in vigorous use.

ker," that is to say, a large rule of smooth and polished deal, used for "sthroking" lines in the copy book, and also for "sthroking" the palms of the refractory pupils. On the other side, lay a lofty heap of copy books, which were left there by the boys and girls for the purpose of having their copies "sot" by "the Masther."

About noon, a sudden hush was produced by the appearance, at the open door, of a young man dressed in rusty black, and with something clerical in his costume and demeanour. This was Mr. Leingan's classical assistant; for to himself the volumes of ancient literature were a fountain sealed. Five or six stout young men, all of whom were intended for learned professions, were the only portion of Mr. Lenigan's scholars that aspired to those lofty sources of information. At the sound of the word "Virgil!" from the lips of the assistant, the whole class started from their seats, and crowded round him, each brandishing a smoky volume of the great Augustan poet, who, could he have looked into this Irish academy, from that part of the infernal regions in which he has been placed by his pupil Dante, might have been tempted to exclaim in the pathetic words of his own hero:

——Sunt hic etiam sau præmia laudi,  
Sunt lachryma rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.

"Who's head?" was the first question proposed by the assistant, after he had thrown open the volume at that part marked as the day's lesson.

"Jim Naughtin, sir."

"Well, Naughtin, begin. Consther, consther,\* now, an be quick:

At puer Ascanius mediis in vallibus acri  
Gaudet equo: jamque hos cursu, jam præterit illos:  
Spumantemque dari—

"Go on, sir, why don't you consther?"

"*At puer Ascanius*," the person so addressed began, "but the boy Ascanius; *mediis in vallibus*, in the middle o' the valleys; *gaudet*, rejoices."

\* Construe, translate.

"Exults, a 'ra gal, exults is a betther word."

"*Gaudet*, exults; *acri equo*, upon his bitther horse."

"Oh, murther alive, his bitther horse, iñagh? Erra, what, would make a horse be bitther, Jim? Sure tisen't of sour beer he's talkin'? Rejoicin' upon a bitther horse! Dear knows, what a show he was, what *raison* he had for it! *Acri equo*, upon his mettlesome steed, that's the construc-tion."

Jim proceeded.

"*Acri equo*, upon his mettlesome steed; *jamque*, and now: *præterit*, he goes beyond:"

"Outsthrrips, a-chree,"

"*Præterit*, he outsthrrips; *hos*, these; *jamque illos*, and now those; *cursu*, in his course; *que*, and; *optat*, he longs."

"Very good, Jim, *longs* is a very good word there, I thought you were goin' to say *wishes*. Did any body tell you that?"

"Dickins a one, sir."

"That's a good boy. Well?"

"*Optat*, he longs; *spumantem aprum*, that a foaming boar; *dari*, shall be given; *votis*, to his desires; *aut fulvum leonem*, or that a tawny lion:"

"That's a good word, agin. *Tawny* is a good word: betther than *yallow*."

"*Descendere*, shall descend; *monte*, from the mountain."

"Now, boys, observe the beauty o' the poet. There's great nature in the picture of the boy Ascanius. Just the same way as we see young Misther Keiley, of the Grove, at the fox chase the other day, batin' the whole of 'em, right an' left, *jamque hos*, *jamque illos*, and now Misther Cleary, an' now Captain Davis, he outsthripped in his coorse. A beautiful picture, boys, there is in them four lines of a fine high-blooded youth. See; people are always the same: times an' manners change, but the heart o' man is the same now as it was in the days of Augustus. But consther your ask. Jim, an' then I'll give you an' the boys a little commentary upon its beauties."

The boy obeyed, and read as far as *præterit nomine cultum*, after which the assistant proceeded to pronounce his little commentary. Unwilling to deprive the literary world of the advantage which the mighty monarch of the Roman

epopée may derive from his analysis, we subjoin the speech without any abridgment :

“ Now, boys, for what I told ye. Them seventeen lines that Jim Naughteen consthered this minute, contains as much as fifty in a modern book. I pointed out to ye before the picture of Ascanius, an’ I’ll back it again’ the world for nature. Then there’s the incipient storm—

Interea magno misceri murmure cælum  
Incipit :

Erra, dont be talkin,’ but listen to that ! There’s a rumblin’ in the language like the sound of comin’ thundher—

—insequitur commista grandine nimbus.

D’ye hear the change ? D’ye hear all the S’s ? D’ye hear ‘em whistlin’ ? D’ye hear the black squall comin’ up the hill side, brushin’ up the dust an’ dhry leaves off the road, and hissin’ through the threes an’ bushes ? an’ d’ye hear the hail dhriven’ afther, an’ spattherin’ the laves, and whitenin’ the face of the counthry ? *Commista grandine nimbus !* That I mightn’t sin, but when I read them words, I gather my head down between my showldhers, as if it was hailin’ a top o’ me. . An’ then the sighth of all the huntin’ party ! Dido, an’ the Throjans, an’ all the great coort ladies, and the Tyrian companions scattered like cracked people about the place, lookin’ for shelther, an’ peltin’ about right and left, hether and thether, in all directions for the bare life, an’ the floods swellin’ an’ comin’ thundherin’ down in rivers from the mountains, an’ all in three lines :

Et Tyrîi comites passim, et Trojana juvenus,  
Dardaniusque nepos Veneris, diversa per agros  
Tecta metû petiere : ruunt de montibus amnes.

And see the beauty o’ the poet, followin’ up the character of Ascanius, he makes him the last to quit the field. First the Tyrian comrades ! an effeminate race, that ran at the sight of a shower, as if they were made o’ salt, that they’d melt undher it, and then the Throjan youth, lads that were used to it, in the first book ; and last of all the spirited boy Ascanius himself, (Silence near the doore !)

do for me. Put up ye'r Virgils, now, boys, an' out with the Greek, an' remember the beauties I pointed out to ye, for they're things that few can explain to ye, if ye haven't the luck to think of 'em ye'rselfes."

The class separated, and a hundred anxious eyes were directed towards the open door. It afforded a glimpse of a sunny green and babbling river, over which Mr. Lenigan, followed by his brother David, was now observed in the act of picking his cautious way. At this apparition, a sudden change took place in the condition of the entire school. Stragglers flew to their places, the incipient burst of laughter was cut short, the growing fit of rage was quelled, the uplifted hand dropped harmless by the side of its owner, merry faces grew serious, and angry ones peaceable, the eyes of all seemed poring on their books, and the extravagant uproar of the last half hour was hushed, on a sudden, into a diligent murmur. Those who were most proficient in the study of "the Masther's" physiognomy, detected in the expression of his eyes, as he entered, and greeted his assistant, something of a troubled and uneasy character. He took the list, with a severe countenance, from the hands of the boy above mentioned, sent all those whose names he found upon the fatal record, to kneel down in a corner until he should find leisure to "hoise" them, and then prepared to enter upon his daily functions.

Before taking his seat, however, he conferred, for a few moments, apart with his brother David, who, with a dejected attitude and a countenance full of sorrow, stood leaning against the open door.

"Ah, 't is nt thinkin' of her I am at all, man alive," he said, in answer to some remonstratory observation from the school-master, "for, sure, what more could be expected, afther what she done? or what betther luck could she hope for? But its what kills me, Harry, is how I'll meet him or tell him of it at all. Afther what I seen of him the other night, what'll he do to me at all, when 'tis the news I bring him, afther he a' most killin' me before for sayin' less."

"If he was to kill any one," replied Mr. Lenigan, "it ought to be Doctor Jervas, for sure what had you to do with the business?"

"Kill Doctor Jervas?" said a sweet voice at the door of the school-house, while at the same time a female shadow

fell upon the sunny floor.—“ Why then, that would be a pity and a loss. What is it he done ?”

“ Ayeh, nothin', nothin', woman,” said David, impatiently.

The new comer was a handsome young woman, who carried a fat child in her arms and held another by the hand. The sensation of pleasure which ran among the young culprits, at her appearance, showed her to be their “ great captain's captain ?” the same, in fact, whom our readers may remember to have already met at the dispensary, and who, by a strict attention to the advice of her physician, had since then become the loved and loving helpmate of Mr. Lenigan. Casting, unperceived by her lord, an encouraging smile towards the kneeling culprits, she took an opportunity, while engaged in a wheedling conversation with her husband, to purloin his deal rule, and to blot out the list of the proscribed from the slate, after which she stole out, calling David after her to dig the potatoes for dinner. That faithful adherent went out in deep dejection, and Mr. Lenigan, moving towards his official position near the fire, resumed the exercise of his authority.

Seated in his chair, and dropping the right leg over the left knee, he laid a copy-book upon this primitive desk, and began to set the boys and girls their head lines ; displaying his own proficiency in penmanship, through all the several gradations of “ sthrokes, pothooks-an'-hangers, large-hand, round-hand, small-hand, and running-hand.” The terror, which his first appearance had excited, dying away by degrees, the former tumult began to be renewed, and a din arose, in the midst of which, the voice of the Masther and his scholar were hardly distinguishable. Occasionally, cries of “ One here sir, scroodging !” \* “ One here, sir, callin' names !” “ One here, sir, if you plase, runnin' out his tongue undher us,” and similar complaints, were heard amidst the general rabble. Mr. Lenigan never took notice of those solitary offences, but when they became too numerous, when the cup of iniquity seemed filled to the brim, and the uproar was at its height, it was his wont suddenly to place the pen between his teeth, lay aside the copy-book, seize the great hazel-bush before described, and walk

\* Crowding.

rapidly along the two lines of stones, lashing the bare legs and naked feet of the young miscreants, heedless of the yells, groans and shrieks of terror and of anguish, by which he was surrounded, and exclaiming, as he proceeded, in a hoarse and angry tone, "Reharse! Reharse! Reharse! Now will ye heed me, now will ye reharse?" Then, returning to his seat, amid the dying sounds of pain and suffering, which still broke faintly from various quarters, he resumed his occupations, enjoying, like a governor general, a peace, procured by the scourge; by involving the guilty and the innocent in one common affliction. And this Lancasterian mode of castigation Mr. Lenigan was in the habit of repeating several times in the course of the day.

Frequently, while he continued his avocations, he looked with an absent and uneasy eye towards the river already mentioned, as if in the expectation of some visiter. Evening, however, approached, or (to use the school chronometer,) the second lesson was over, and nobody appeared. This circumstance seemed to throw additional ill-humour into his physiognomy, and he seemed to long for some good opportunity of indulging it. The same absence of mind and depression of spirits was observed in his conversation with those neighbours who strolled in upon him in the course of the afternoon, and talked of the politics of the day, the prospects of Europe; and other trivial subjects, such as suit the understanding and information of politicians in a country village.

It was the custom at Lenigan's academy, as it is at most Irish seminaries of a similar description, that no one should be permitted to leave the precincts of the school-room without taking with them a huge bone, (the femur of a horse) which lay for that purpose in the centre of the floor, and which, on account of the privilege of furlough which it conferred, was designated by the name of The Pass. There were many conveniences attending this regulation. It protected Mr. Lenigan from the annoyance of perpetual applications for leave of absence, and it prevented the absence of more than one at a time from the immediate sphere of the master's surveillance. There were, indeed, a few of the grown boys, who were already forward in their classes, who understood book-keeping, compound interest, and enough of geometry to demonstrate the ass's bridge, and who,



upon the strength of their acquirements, considered themselves privileged to condemn this boyish regulation, and to use their own discretion about studying in the open air and sunshine, stretched along the river's side, or under the shelter of the school-house.

An idle red-haired boy had been absent with The Pass for nearly a quarter of an hour, and Lenigan's countenance began to wax exceedingly wroth at his delay. Suddenly he appeared at the door-way, through which the sinking sun now darted a more slanting beam, and tossed the bone into the centre of the floor, where it produced the same effect as if he had thrown it into a kennel of hounds. While they were wrangling for The Pass, the young delinquent pleaded his excuse with Mr. Lenigan, by informing him that a gentleman was waiting for his brother David in the beech wood, at the other side of the river.

Mr. Lenigan committed the charge of the school, for some minutes, to his assistant, appointed a lad to "keep the list," breathed vengeance against all who should make an unruly use of his absence, shook his hand at the kneeling culprits in the corner, buttoned up his coat, and hopped across the threshold, with the view of finding his brother, who had little doubt that the stranger was no other than Francis Riordan.

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## CHAPTER IX.

IN a little opening of the beech wood, strewed with dry leaves and withered branches, and chequered with dancing gleams of sunshine, the young patriot stood, awaiting the arrival of his humble friend, with extreme impatience. Francis was one of those rare beings in whom fearless courage is combined with a delicate appreciation of what is right. He would himself have made any sacrifice, have endured any privation, have braved any danger, rather than do violence to his own sense of what was honourable; and his attachments, as a natural consequence, were always doubly strong in proportion to the sacrifices which he made on their

account. Without entertaining much doubt, as to the effect which his brief note might produce upon the mind of Esther, his anxiety to learn her answer approached a degree of torture.

And, here, it is fitting that the reader should be made aware of that early cause of quarrel which existed between Richard Lacy and our hero, and which was the immediate occasion of the long exile of the latter.

Several years since, it will be remembered, the south of Ireland was proclaimed to be in a state of disturbance, and a constabulary force was formed in all the baronies for the purpose of overawing the discontented peasantry. No great national good can ever be accomplished without drawing many individual afflictions in its train. So it proved on this occasion. The formation of such a body afforded to those persons (so numerous in Ireland) who turn every public work into what is vulgarly termed a *job*, a good opportunity for the exercise of their vocation.

Richard Lacy was one of those magistrates who, at the period of which we speak, sought preferment by an emulative display of zeal and activity in the discharge of their duties. He scrupled the exercise of no cruelty which might place him frequently before the eyes of the privy council in the light of a diligent and useful officer, and he succeeded fully in his design. He became an object of terror to the peasantry, and of high favour at the Castle. He filled the jails and transport ships with victims; he patrolled the country every night from sun-set to sun-rise, and earned the applause of his patrons, by rendering himself an object of detestation in his neighbourhood.

Among those persons of his own rank who viewed the proceedings of Lacy with feelings of strong disapproval, was his young neighbour, Francis Riordan. Highly gifted, highly educated, patriotic even to a want of wisdom, and disinterested to a chivalrous degree, he stood forward in defence of the oppressed, and showed himself a determined and an able opponent of their oppressor. But a circumstance which occurred, at a time when their mutual hostility had reached its highest point, and which showed indeed but little prudence on the part of Riordan, placed him entirely within the power of his magisterial enemy.

A poor cottager in his neighbourhood had stolen out be-  
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the day-break, for the purpose of taking his oats to market, which was at a considerable distance from his home. He fell into the hands of Lacy's night patrol, was tried before the Special Sessions, and received the customary sentence passed on all who were found absent from their homes between sun-set and sun-rise; namely, seven years' transportation to one of the colonies.

Aware of his innocence, and pitying his wretched family, who were thus deprived of their only support, young Riordan was for the first, and only time in his life, betrayed into an act which could not be justified even by the generous feelings in which it originated. He encouraged the prisoner's plan to attempt a rescue, and suggested a plan for his liberation, which evinced, at least, as much of talent as it did of disloyalty. It was carried into effect in the following manner.

On his way to the Cove of Cork, the prisoner was confined for a few days at the police barracks of ———, within a few miles of his own neighbourhood. It was a fine summer morning: the police were loitering in the sunshine, while their arms were grounded inside the house. Their force was fifteen, including the sergeant and chief. The latter, seated on a chair outside the door, with a silk handkerchief drawn over his head, to moderate the fervour of the sun, was employed in nursing his right foot in his lap, rocking the leg down gently from the knee to the ankle, and inhaling the fumes of a Havanna cigar.

On a sudden, a countryman presented himself before the door of the barrack, almost breathless from speed, and with a face that was flushed and glistening, as after violent exertion. He informed the chief that a number of the country people had detected a notorious disturber of the peace, for whose apprehension a large reward had been held out, and for whom the police had been for a long time on the watch. They were, he said, in the act of dragging him towards the barrack for the purpose of leaving him safe in the custody of the King's servants.

At the same moment a crowd of persons were seen hastening down a neighbouring hill and hurrying along in the direction of the barrack. When they came sufficiently near, it was observed that they had a prisoner in the midst, whom they bore along by the neck and heels with loud shouts and

exclamations of triumph. Enraptured at his prize, the chief ordered them to be admitted into the barrack, while handcuffs were prepared for the culprit, and a room allotted for his confinement. The crisis of the adventure now approached. On a signal given by the prisoner, his captors loosed their hold ; he sprung to his feet, struck the chief a blow that levelled him, shouted aloud to his companions, and exclaimed, "The arms! the arms! Down with the tyrants! Down with the — Peelers!"

All was confusion in an instant. The arms were seized, the police were laid on their backs, and tied neck and heels, the doors were dashed in upon their hinges, the prisoners rushed out into the air, and, before five minutes, the whole stratagem was successfully concluded. The police were left, bound head and foot in their own barrack, and the rebels were in the heart of the mountains.

The rage of Lacy at discovering this circumstance was extreme. The cleverness with which the feat was performed made it the subject of general conversation, and much disloyal laughter was indulged at the expense of the simple chief. After many exertions, Lacy was enabled to make the discovery that young Riordan was the contriver of this scheme, though not, as some averred, the identical prisoner who had carried it into execution.

This was the circumstance which had first compelled our hero to absent himself from home, and this was the circumstance that obliged him to use his present caution in order to avoid the risk which would attend his being generally recognised. The hatred which Lacy bore him was, he well knew, deep, black, intense, and deadly, and he paid Lacy back the full amount of his detestation, with better reason on his side, and with the addition of a world of scorn.

Riordan now stood, awaiting the arrival of David Lenigan, forming a thousand conjectures as to the nature of Miss Wilderming's answer, and walking backwards and forwards over the withered branches, with his cloak gathered close about his person, and his eyes bent on the ground. A rustling among the boughs made him start, and he beheld David approaching, with a face which had no omen of pleasing news in its expression.

"Well, Lenigan," he said, in a hasty tone, "what answer

have you from Miss Wilderming? Does she forget me altogether? or have I any thing to hope?"

David's first reply was a troubled look and a deep sigh.

"Speak, man! If you have evil news, David, I know how to bear it. I have been used to disappointments of the kind."

"Tell me, masther Frank, what road did you take in comin' here?"

"The road from Roundwood, to be sure."

"An' what sighths did you see on the way?"

"I saw," said Francis, turning pale and speaking faintly, "a carriage and servants with white favours."

"Ah, but that was comin' from the house?"

"It was."

"She was not in it, sir. I didn't spake o' that. Did you see nothin' going the road to the lakes?"

"Not I. There was no other carriage of any kind—there was, ha! mighty justice! I met a hearse!"

"A hearse with white plumes?"

"Aye!"

"Oh, masther Frank, I have no good news to tell you.—Turn your face away from me, for I wouldn't like to look at you afther what I have to say."

Francis made several efforts to speak, but his voice failed him. At length, stooping down and grasping the arm of his attendant, he said, in a low voice: "Go on, my good fellow, tell me the whole at once."

"Why then I will, masther Frank. I told you before that she was very ill, an' so when I went to the house afther I partin' you, I gev the paper to Mrs. Keleher, an' I told her that an answer was expected direct. Well, she went, an' if she did, it wasn't long afther, when I hard a screech that pierced through my two ears. I asked what was the matther? an' I'm sure it's too soon I got my answer. Ah, masther Frank, you never more will see that darlin', she's in a betther place than any this world could afford her, although bein' a methodish, an' all."

When he had heard this speech, Francis trembled exceedingly, and remained silent and dejected for many minutes. It seemed as if he were making an effort to man himself, and avoid betraying any emotion that would show a want of fortitude. But it was impossible that such a

struggle could be successful. He walked a few paces, and his knees began to shake with so much violence that he was obliged to look around for a seat. Before he could find one, the weakness increased, and he fell senseless to the earth.

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## CHAPTER X.

WITH the assistance of some friends, David had his old master conveyed to his brother's little dwelling in the neighbourhood. During that night, and nearly the whole of the following day, Francis spoke not a word, and seemed to be scarcely conscious of what passed around him. He rejected all food, and delivered himself up to an extreme dejection of mind. Towards evening, however, he called Davy to his bedside and made him detail all he knew of the circumstances attending Esther's death, which the poor fellow, hoping to alleviate his master's affliction by awakening something like an interest in his mind, recapitulated with great precision. The nurse, he said, had found her lifeless in her bed. The Damers were in the utmost distress at this event, and Richard Lacy had conducted himself, ever since, like a distracted person. While Francis listened to this last portion of the narrative, the speaker heard him ejaculate in a low whisper the words "Poor fellow!"

"That was what killed me!" said David, a few days afterward in telling the circumstance to Mrs. Keleher, "the moment I heard him showin' pity for Lacy, I knew his heart was broke! He never will hold his head up again, says I to myself, as long as ever he lives!"

Night fell, lonely and dark, upon those dreary hills, and Francis had not yet begun to take an interest in any thing which passed around him. David's family were all in bed, and he sat alone by the fire-side, watching, lest some sudden illness should render his assistance necessary to his master. He was just dozing in his hay-bottomed chair, and dreamed that he was holding a controversy with Aaron Sheo-

herd, when he felt a hand press lightly upon his shoulder, and a voice whisper in his ear some words that his fancy construed into a different meaning :

"Wake, David, wake! I want you!" said the voice.

"I don't mind that a brass farthin'," murmured David, through his sleep, "I read the Doway Testament, with note and comment, an' I take the church for my guide, not a man like Martin Luther, that was instructed by the divil himself. Doesn't he own to it, in his books? A' howl your tongue now, Aaron. One time or another you'll know the thruth o' what I'm tellin' you, an' dhrop your convartin'."

"Hush! David, David!"

"A' dhrop your convartin', man, I tell you again. Sure you know in your heart that if there was no thruth in it, 'twould be found out in the coorse o' fifteen hundred years."

Here he felt his shoulder shaken with a degree of force which compelled him to awake. Looking up, he beheld Francis Riordan, pale even to ghastliness, standing at his side, dressed, and with his cloak around him.

"Masther Francis, is it you, sir? Oh, what made you get up?"

"Be still, David. Are your friends in bed?"

"They are, sir."

"Hush, speak low!" whispered Francis, "do you know the cottage where we used to watch for the wild duck?"

"At the foot of Derrybawn?"

"Aye, aye, upon the flat; is it occupied at present?"

"There's no one living there, sir, now."

"It is very well:" said the young man. "Will you tell me now where they have buried Esther?"

David remained for some minutes staring on his master in great astonishment.

"My good fellow," said the latter, observing him pause, "this tale of yours has almost broken my heart. I was so sure of happiness, when I was returning to Ireland, that I find it almost impossible to sustain this disappointment. I think it would be some consolation to me if I could see Esther, once again, even in her grave."

David started back in his seat, and gaped upon the young soldier in mingled awe and wonder.

"Make no noise, but answer me:" said Francis. "Is she buried in the vault of the Damers?"

" 'Tis there she is, sir, surely," returned David, " in the Cathedral at Glendalough."

" It is enough," said his master. " Come then, David, arise and follow me down to the Seven Churches. Alive or dead, I must see Esther Wilderming once more."

David arose, still half stupified with astonishment.

" Have you got any instrument," said Francis, " with which we may remove the stones from the mouth of the tomb?"

This mention of an instrument placed the undertaking for the first time in all its practical horror before the eyes of David.

" Oh, mather Francis!" he said " go into your bed, sir, an' don't be talkin' o' these things. Let the dead rest in peace! When we bury our friends, we give 'em back into the hands of the Almighty that gave 'em to us, to bless an' comfort us in this world, an' he tells us that he'll send his own angel to wake them up when his great day is come.— Let us lave them, then, where they lie, silent an' cold, until that thrumpet sounds, an' not presume to lay an unholy tool upon the house of the dead!"

" Be silent," said Francis, with a tone which had something in it of peculiar and gloomy sternness. " Come not between the shade of Esther Wilderming and me. What ever was her thought of me when living, she now must know my heart, and I am sure that her spirit will not grieve to see me as a visiter in her midnight sepulchre. You tell me that her face was changed by sorrow and by sickness, I wish but to behold it. It was almost the only sight on earth that could have made it worth a residence, and a people disenthralled and happy. It is gone from me, now, for ever. and except I seek her in her tomb, I have lived and hoped in vain. Ah, shall a few feet of earth hide Esther from my gaze, after I have come o'er half the world to look upon her? Arise, and obey me!"

David dared not reply, but, taking his hat, went with his master into the open air. He brought with him a pick-axe, used by a relative who worked at the lead mines on the neighbouring hills, and followed his master in silence.

Before they had walked many hundred yards, the Valley of the Seven Churches opened upon their view in a manner as lonely and beautiful as it was impressive. The moon



unclouded by a single wandering mist, shed its pale blue light upon the wild and solemn scene. Before them, on a gently undulating plain, stood the ruins of the Churches, with the lofty round tower which flung its shadow, gnomon-like, along the grassy slope. A few trees waved slowly to and fro in the nightwind. The shadows of the broken hills fell dark upon the streaked and silvery surface of the lakes, hiding half the watery expanse in gloom, while the remainder, broken up into diminutive wavelets of silver, rolled on, and died upon the shore with gentle murmurs. One side of the extensive chasm in which the lakes reposed was veiled in shade. On the other the moonlight shone over tumbling masses of granite and felspar, and glimmered bright on countless points that sparkled with mica and hornblende. A moaning wind came downward, by the ruins, and seemed like the voice of the dead, heard thus at night in their own silent region.

Far on their left, overhanging the gleamy water, appeared that precipitous cliff, beneath the brow of which the young Saint Kevin hewed out his dizzy resting place. The neighbouring legends say, that, in his early days, the Saint resided at the beautiful lake of Luggela, described in a former chapter, where he was first seen and loved by the fair Cathleen, the daughter of a chieftain in that country.

Nearer, and also on the left, stood the Cathedral, which was more especially the object of young Riordan's search at this moment.

"Pass on," he said to his attendant, "and see if there be any body loitering among the ruins."

Lenigan obeyed, and Francis remained gazing on the gentle acclivity on which the ivied walls of the old church were standing. The burial-ground, with its lofty granite crosses, and its white head-stones glistening in the moonshine, lay within a short distance. "O earth!" he said, within his own mind, as he looked musingly upon those slight memorials of the departed, "O earth, our mother and our nurse, you are kinder to us than our living friends. You give us life at first, and you supply us with all that can make life sweet while we retain it. You furnish food for our support, raiment for our defence, gay scenes to please our sight, and sounds of melody to sooth our hearing. And when, after all your cares, we droop, and pine, and die, you open your

bosom to receive and hide us from the contempt and loathing of the world, at a time when the dearest and truest among our living friends would turn from our mouldering frames with abhorrence and dismay!"

A slight signal, given by Davy Lenigan, here interrupted the meditation of the young man, and he proceeded to the church with a rapid, but firm step. He found David standing before the monument of the Damers with the pickaxe in his hand.

"Lenigan," said he, "there is one thing that I have forgot. Return to the deserted cottage; of which we were speaking, light up a fire, and make a pallet of some kind, for I will not go back to your house to-night."

David gazed on his master for some moments, in deep perplexity and awe.

"For the sake of glory, masther Francis," he said in a beseeching tone, "what is it you mane to do this night? I'm in dhread, you're thinkin' o' doin' something on this holy ground that isn't right."

"Ask no questions," replied Francis, in a gloomy voice, "but do as you are commanded. Lose no more time, for the moon is sinking low, and the dawn may overtake us before we have done half what I intend."

David obeyed in silence, and Francis sat down on the headstone of some poor tenant of the grave-yard, expecting his return, and thinking of Esther.

A quarter of an hour had scarcely passed, when Lenigan returned, and they proceeded to remove the stones from the mouth of the sepulchre. A sudden wind, rushing through the aperture, blew chill upon the heated frame of the young lover, and made him shiver in all his limbs before he ventured to descend.

"What was that cry?" he said, suddenly starting.

"What cry, sir? I heard nothing."

"Not now?"

"Oh, now I do. 'Tis nothin', sir, only the owl in the Round Tower, or, may be, the eagle that's startled in Lug-duff."

"It must be so," replied Riordan, "but I thought it had almost a human sorrow in its shrillness. 'Tis strange, how soon our senses become the slaves of our passion, and flatter it with strange compliances, giving its colour to the sights,

and its tone to the sounds, by which we are surrounded. How dark the vault is! So—and after all, and all, 'tis here that I must visit Esther!”

“Is it any thing he seen, I wondher,” muttered David to himself, observing him pause and hesitate. “I hope an’ thrust it is afeerd his gettin’.”

But he hoped in vain. In a few minutes, Francis shook off his mood of meditation, and entered the mouth of the tomb, creeping upon his hands and feet. Lenigan, who feared lest he might do himself a mischief, hurried after, and found him seated at the bottom of a flight of stone steps which ascended from the floor of the vault, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, and his face buried in his hands. On hearing Lenigan’s voice, he started up, as if from a reverie, and uncovering the lanthorn which he had concealed beneath his cloak, the vault became illuminated on a sudden.

“Take this cloak,” said Francis, unclasping it from his throat, and handing it to his bewildered companion—“take this cloak, and hang it up before the opening, lest any one should see the light from without.”

The attendant complied, and Francis proceeded to examine the lids of the coffins which were piled on all sides around the gloomy apartment.

“Was it by her own desire,” said the young man, in a low and reverential voice, “that Esther was buried here, in the vault of the Damers?”

“It was, sir,” returned David, who almost trembled with fear. “Dear knows, mather Frank, this is no place for us to be talkin’ this time o’ night. Do whatever you have to do, an’ come away, an’ the heavens bless you, sir!”

Without returning any answer, Francis proceeded to examine the coffins with the open lanthorn. His attendant followed him with his eyes, as he read the inscriptions on the coffin-plates aloud, and observed him shrink and look still more ghastly when any denoted that the inhabitant was a female who had died young. One observation only David heard him make while he passed the light over the rich decorations and silver mounting of the coffins.

“I told you, I believe,” said he, “that I am now wealthy. Lest I should forget to mention it in my will, take care after my death that I am buried in a plain coffin.”

"After your death, masther Frank, a' ragal!" exclaimed David, in a terrified voice.

"Yes," said Francis, "if you should survive me. Ah, heaven, what ghastly foppery is this!"

He passed on, and came at length to a plain coffin, before which he paused, and began to tremble exceedingly. On the lid was a silver plate with the words, "ESTHER WILDERMING, AGED 21 YEARS," engraved upon it. He remained for some time motionless, like one in a fit of deep musing, and then sunk down at once, utterly bereft of consciousness, upon the coffin lid.

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## CHAPTER XI.

THE alarm of David, at seeing his master thus lying insensible in the vault of death, was at its height. He hurried to the side of the unhappy youth, endeavoured to arouse him into life, and manifested the utmost distress at the difficulty he found in reviving him.

"Masther Frank!" he exclaimed, "rouse yourself up, sir, an' let us come away! Masther Frank, I say! awake, stir again! O, that I mightn't sin but he's dead an' gone, an' I'm done for! Masther Frank, again! He's dead an' gone, an' the neighbours 'll come, and they'll catch me here, an' they'll say I murdered him, an' I'll be hung, an' kilt, an' spoilt, an' murther't, an'—O Davy Lenigan, Davy Lenigan, an' warn't you the foolish man, to be said by him at all this holy night?"

A long deep moan, from the unhappy young man, cut short his anxious soliloquy, and occasioned David to redouble his attentions. In a few minutes Francis was again in full possession of his senses.

He took up the pick-axe from the earth, and was about to deal a blow upon the fastening of the coffin-lid, when Davy ventured to arrest his arm.

"Why do you hold me?" said Francis, looking on him with an eye in which sorrow strove with anger, "let go my arm, and stand aside."



## THE RIVALS.

"Masther Frank, forgive me, I can't. now, I won't."

"I'm arm," repeated Francis, with a faint effort.

"You're not right in your mind now, masther Francis," said the faithful fellow, "an' you'd do something that's not good for the corpse an' coffin."

"Again, stand back and free me."

"I dar'n't do it, sir."

"Hold off, stand away, then," cried Francis, springing up and hurling his companion back among the coffins with a strength which fury only could supply, "Hold off! or, as I live and suffer, I'll dash your brains out! Impudent man! whose corse do you talk of? Hers! you are very bold, to think that I would harm her! Hold back, and touch me not, nor speak, nor move, nor breathe aloud, or I will ease my agony upon you! Avoid me then, if you suppose me mad, and do not tempt the fury of a breaking heart. Mad? Aye, indeed, and dreadfully insane too; a burning madness; lunacy with consciousness; the madness of the heart and the affections, that makes the bosom one wild Bedlam of frantic uproar and affliction, while the soul is able to look upon the tumult with all the exquisite pain of perfect consciousness! This is my torture now, though you perceive it not. Oh, that my brain would burst! Good heaven, forgive me if I sin!"

He uttered the last sentence in a tone of piercing anguish, and then sunk down as if the fit of passion had exhausted him.

"Let us cease this indecorous loudness," he said, after some time, "it becomes neither the place nor the occasion. I have wasted too much time already. Interrupt me no more."

"Indeed, masther Frank, I meant no offence in life, only to hinder you of doing now what you might be sorry for another time."

"Good fellow! my good, faithful fellow, forgive me! I am sure of it; you are a good and honest servant, and broken-hearted as I am, and forgetful of all earthly things, I will remember that for you before I die. But do not cross me, Davy, in these fits. I don't know how or why it is, but I feel that I have lost all government of my own nature

since this dreadful accident. My brain is changing, moment after moment, and pain and passion come and go again without my intervention, or even my knowledge. Now, my heart is dull as lead, my head swims, my nerves are all insensible, and I think my suffering is at an end. And presently, a sudden fancy strikes upon my heart, and shoots like fire into every member of my frame, and thrills my nerves, and stabs my brain to the quick, and makes me, for the time, a maniac!" He pressed his clenched hand against his temples, and stamped against the earth like one in exquisite suffering. "I only wish," he continued, in a more moderate tone, "to look upon the face of Esther for once, and then we will leave the vault together."

David dared not to offer even a word of remonstrance, but looked on in awe-struck silence, while his master, with some exertion, succeeded in striking up the lid from the coffin. The perfume of some balmy extracts, which were scattered in the shroud, diffused a sudden air of sweetness throughout the damp and gloomy charnel.

"It is very strange!" said Francis, in a broken whisper, while large drops of agony like those which are said to be wrung from a wretch upon the rack, glistened and rolled downward from his brow and temples. "It is very strange! How long is it now since Esther died?"

"Better than two days, sir, very near the third night now."

"It is very strange, indeed. Here is not the slightest change upon the face. Ah, death! It is as cold as iron!"

He raised the head gently, between his hands, imprinted a reverential kiss upon the forehead, and then drew back a little to gaze at leisure on the face. It was extremely beautiful; and, owing, perhaps, to the peculiar light, seemed almost to have retained some shade of the carnation, to which, in life, it owed so much of its loveliness. This sight produced at length a salutary effect upon the blasted affections of the young lover, the tears burst from his eyes, and he leaned forward over the corpse, in a mood of gentle and heart-easing grief.

After some time, he rose again, and bade Davy to come nearer.

"Answer nothing, now," said he, "to what I shall propose, but obey me, at once, and without contradiction. I

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am going to take Esther from this vault, and to bury her near that cottage."

"Oh, murther! murther!"

"Peace, and do not breathe a word, but prepare directly to assist me. Replace the coffin lid, when I have taken her up; be speedy and be silent."

He raised the body with tenderness, laid it across his bosom, with the head resting on his shoulder, and signified that his attendant should close the coffin. This being done, and the cloak removed from the mouth of the sepulchre, he once more clasped it on his throat, and drew it close around the lifeless form which he bore in his arms. Stooping low with his burthen, he ascended the flight of steps already mentioned, and passed out into the air.

"Oh, vo!" murmured David to himself, "that I may be blest, but the gallows will be our portion for our doin's this night."

He followed his master, and they hurried out of the churchyard, passing beneath the ruined archway on the northern side, and down the slope which led to the common road.

His long abstinence, and the exhausting nature of the passions with which he had contended, had so far enfeebled the frame of the young soldier, that it was with difficulty he bore the corpse along. His attendant, who beheld him falter, ran hastily after, and endeavoured to prevail on him to deliver the burthen to his care, but Francis would as soon have parted with his life. An unexpected assistance, however, presented itself.

When they came to the stile, which led to the road, they found a man standing near a horse and cart, which was half filled with straw.

"Is that masther John?" he asked in a low voice.

"Have you all ready?" answered Francis, without hesitation.

"All ready, sir; pruh! tumble it in, sir, at once, an' let us be off. Faix, you wor'nt long. Tumble it in, sir, for I hear the police is out with Misther Lacy, the magistrate, in these parts. It will set us to be in town before day."

Francis got into the car, still holding the corpse in his arms, and they drove up the road without speaking. When

they had arrived at the turn which led to the cottage so frequently alluded to, Francis laid a strong hold upon the man, bade him in a low voice to stop the cart.

"Go down again," said he, "and wait for master John. Stir, speak, move, raise hand or voice to cross me, and I will shoot you through the brains."

He drew a pocket pistol from his bosom and descended from the cart. The man stood stupified, looking on, while Francis gathered the shrouded figure once more into his arms, and then cantered down the hill, apparently not displeased to be rid of so fiery a companion.

When the cart was out of sight, Francis hurried up the narrow lane which led to the cottage, and was followed by Davy, whose mind was now completely bewildered by the accumulation of terrors and mysteries which he had undergone.

"The Sack-'em-ups!" he exclaimed, gazing down the road, in the direction of the Seven-Churches. "The plunderin' Sack-'em-ups! An' sure, what betther are we ourselves this holy night afther takin' the lady from her people? O mother, mother! its little you thought that any o' your children would ever turn out a Sack-'em-up, to disgrace his parentage!"

They entered the cottage, where the fire was already burning cheerfully upon the hearth. Having carefully closed the door, and made it fast behind them, they proceeded to arrange the body on a wide form, which was placed near the fire side, and the lanthorn was hung up, so as to shine full upon the lifeless features.

"There she lies, at last!" said Francis folding his arms and looking down on the dead face, "there now lies Esther Wilderming, the young, the gay, the lovely, and the virtuous! An old woman told me, once, that I had been overlooked in my infancy, and I am almost superstitious enough to credit her. Otherwise, why should it be that there, where my best affections have been centred and my keenest hopes awakened, there I have been ever sure to undergo a disappointment? But I have snatched her out of Lacy's arms, and even this dismal meeting has a consolation compared with that appalling rumour of her falsehood. Esther! dear Esther, I forgive you, now. How beautiful she was! *Was!* Oh, that word has death in its sound for me. For your



sake, Esther, I will lead an altered life from henceforth. I never will hope more, not even for the natural blessings that go and come with the revolving year, for I think, if anything could shorten the liberal hand of Nature, and cause her to withhold her ancient customary bounties, it would be the longing of a wretch like me. I never more will dress, game, play, sing, laugh, or mingle in the gayeties of earth. My dream of death is out; my plans of quiet and domestic joy entirely baffled. In war, in peace, in action, or repose, in mirth, or in musing, I never more can know a happy feeling; never indeed, oh, never! never! never!"

He sunk down, utterly exhausted by grief, fatigue, and want of food, by the side of the corpse, the fire light shining dusky red on the pale and delicate lineaments of the dead, and on the no less pale and haggard aspect of the living who lay near. David lay stretched at a distance on a heap of fresh straw and rushes, offering up many prayers, and unable to conceive what would be the result of this extraordinary vigil.

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## CHAPTER XII.

LET us, for the present, leave them watching, and return to Richard Lacy, whose distraction at the death of Esther has been already adverted to.

He had loved this beautiful girl as intensely as a man is capable of loving, who is likewise occupied by the two dissimilar passions of hatred and ambition. And perhaps his disappointment was now the more intolerable, as the whole three, his love for Esther, purely and honestly for her own sake, his detestation of Riordan, and his general ambition, might be all directly or indirectly gratified by the projected marriage. The expression of his grief, in consequence, partook of the desolation of thwarted love, the fury of baffled vengeance, and the agony of disappointed ambition. His own domestics feared to approach him in his chamber, in which he had shut himself up immediately after his return from the funeral.

"The plagues of Egypt on the boyish passion!" he exclaimed, "that will not let me rest! Why, curse of my heart! what is she now to me, that I should pule and grieve about her? Down with these damning pangs!" [he stamped fiercely upon the floor] "and let me think. Up! Lacy, be a man, and let her go! Look to the future. Up! what have you lost? You've drawn your bolt, and shot, and missed your mark, and must not waste your life in looking after the lost shaft. The quiver's full, and the world is young yet. Up! The stoutest wrestler may endure a fall, and rise again, well-breathed, and live and conquer! Despise this weakness, and think you are born for higher things than to sit down and pine over a piece of painted earth!" He paused on a sudden, and leaned forward on the table, his temples resting between his open hands and his eyes fixed in abstraction. "Beautiful! beautiful!" he murmured more gently, as the pale sweet face came slowly forward and acquired almost the distinctness of reality in his imagination. "I could not at first avoid loving her, and I cannot now forbear to sorrow for her death. Ah, bear with me, Ambition, for a while! Beautiful, gentle, gay, kind, modest, graceful, talented, accomplished, where is her likeness to be found on earth? Well, soar at what point I will, there I am struck. One happiness, at least, I never can enjoy, the quiet bliss of a domestic life; that, and the triumph over Riordan's memory. She is gone to meet him!" Here he sprung up, and struck the table in a paroxysm of fury. "If there's another life, and sure I cannot think her all destroyed, she is now at Riordan's side!" He paused a moment, and burst into a fit of laughter at the wildness of his own fancy. "But that," he continued, "made a part of my happiness. I hated him, and I would have given half the world to take that vengeance on him even in his grave."

A timid knock at the door interrupted his passionate soliloquy.

"Who's there?" he asked, in a furious tone.

"Nobody, only Nancy Guerin, sir," replied a gentle voice.

"What do you want? Quick, tell me your business, and be gone. Who wants me?"

"Nobody, only Mr. Tobin, sir. He wishes to know would you let him up here."

"Curse, plague on him and you! what does he mean? What does he want?"

"Nothing sir, I believe, only—"

The sound of a loud, rattling voice like that of one highly excited by strong drink, was at this moment heard upon the staircase, and cut short the projected speech of the young servant. The accent had something in it of more refinement than is usual in the humbler classes, but was yet far too broad to let it be supposed that the speaker actually filled the rank of a gentleman.

"Let me alone for finding him," said he, as he ascended, rather unsteadily, "I leave announcements to my cousins and the family. Tom Tobin's own honest face was the best letther of introduction he ever carried about him. I'll let announcements alone until I can sport a carriage. Lacy!" he continued, putting his hands to his sides, throwing his head back and roaring out at the top of his voice. "Lacy, my boy! my lad! my hero! Lacy, my prince of papists, here's honest Tom Tobin come to see you!"

"The plague of Egypt and of all the fiends! what shall I do?" cried Lacy, in an agony of rage and suffering.

"Will I call Owen, sir, to stop him?"

"Call death! call Lucifer! call—— Ah, good Tobin, you are welcome," he added, changing his tone, as Tobin's gaunt and ill-dressed figure came in sight. "Welcome, although you find me in a mournful hour."

He drew him in, and shut the door.

"Sorry for your throubles, misther Lacy, but those are misfortunes that all must look for in the coorse o' nature."

"Sit down; I thank you, Tobin. We must all die."

"It stands to raison we should," returned Tobin, endeavouring to look sober, "the highest and lowest must go, they must quit, tramp, march! that's the chat! My cousins an' the family have no more a lase o' their lives than honest Tom Tobin himself. There's my comfort. They must all cut their sticks, when the rout comes—off, in a pop! Well, so as one has a dacent funeral, all is one."

"Tobin—" said Lacy.

"That's my name, the family name, a family I never was ashamed of yet. I wish they could say the same o' me, but that would set 'em. I was always a blackguard; good-for-

nothing but idleness and vice, just a fit tool for such a knave as you, but a better descended gentleman never swung upon the gallows."

"Good Tobin, I am busy—"

"They talk of my drinking and swearing and licentiousness. Very well, I admit it. But look at poor Owen. There's a pattern of piety and good conduct! Owen never wronged a human being of a sixpence. He never was heard to utter a profane or licentious speech. He is as constant in his attendance at chapel as if he was coorting the minister's daughter, and he never was (to say) drunk in his life. There's my pride. I pick pride out o' that. Is there a man in the country can show me such a cousin as that."

"Tobin—"

"Shabby? Psha, I admit it, I never had any taste for dress in my life—but look at Bill! He mounts the best cut coat in Grafton Street. There's my pride. He come down here last year, and I borrowed his coat to get one made by Speirin, the tailor, on the same cut. He looked at it, folded up the coat, and gave it back into my hands: 'Sir,' says he, 'there isn't two tailors in Ireland that could make such a coat. I'm sorry to lose your custom, but there's no use in my promising what I can't do.' There's my pride. I pick pride out o' that."

"Deservedly, Tobin. Pray, hear me now."

"East or west, north or south, right, left, where will you find such a family, just putting myself out of the question?"

"Ay, ay, but hear me—"

"And for elegance—look at this. I won't boast, but my cousin Dick is no clod. That I'll say for him."

"You're drunk, sir!" said Lacy, angrily.

"Eh? well, an' what if I am. That's more than Owen would be, I never saw a cousin o' mine drunk before dinner in my life."

"You are rude."

"Ha, that's more than you could say of Dick. That's a finished gentleman."

"Hear me."

"I pick no pride out o' myself. I know what I am."

"Fool, madman, knave, and drunkard!" cried Lacy, stamping in a paroxysm of rage.

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"That's my name  
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to forget yourself. But all is one. I  
 money."

it, Tobin. You have drawn my wealth.  
 draws blood, already. I have none to give you

want to get your gold for nothing," returned  
 I have got a piece of paper, here, that is worth  
 sovereigns at all events."

his eyes sparkled.

What's that?" he said eagerly, "information about  
 affairs?"

No, nor the foxes either. If I know any thing of your  
 there is a word upon this paper that will make it  
 a little. Who do you think is alive?"

Esther Wilderming!" shrieked Lacy, springing to his  
 raising his clasped hands and shaking in every limb,  
 his features glowed and quivered, and his eyes shone  
 with the sudden expectation. Before Tobin an-

however, the folly of this idea became visible to his  
 ment, and he sunk down into his chair in a fit of ex-  
 citation as sudden as the excitement. "Ah, curse!" he  
 said: "it is not possible?"

"Guess again!" said Tobin, coolly.

"My wit is out," returned Lacy, with a ghastly look.  
 Pray, have some mercy on me. Whom do you mean?"

"Young Riordan, the paythriot."

"Riordan!"

"Francis Riordan."

Lacy shrunk back in his seat, like a snail into its shell.  
 and remained for a short time in an attitude so contracted  
 that his naturally diminutive stature was reduced to one  
 half. A long deep silence ensued.

"I am still more wretched than I thought," he muttered  
 at length, while his dark eyes flashed sullen fire upon the  
 informer. "Esther is dead, and Riordan lives and tri-  
 umphs!—The spring tide of my fortunes is upon the fall.  
 My spirits will begin to sink at last."

"But what if Riordan should return, and place himself  
 within your power?"

Lacy's eyes gleamed gladness at the suggestion, but he  
 did not long continue to look pleased. "No, no," he mur-  
 mured, "he is far too wise to set his foot again on Irish soil.  
 He cannot think me so forgetful."

"He has done it, for all that."

"Done what?"

"He is here in Ireland; here in the county Wicklow."

The agitation which Lacy manifested at this intelligence was excessive. His countenance changed colour, and his frame trembled with anxiety. The hurried eagerness, which was visible in all his manner, resembled, but in a far more intense degree, that of a fowler who sees his victim just hovering about the spring which he has laid for its destruction.

"Good Tobin!" he said, "good, trusty fellow, how do you know this? Mock me not now with any false report; say it not rashly, if you love my peace! If this be false," he stamped with fury on the floor, "if I be mocked, I'll hang you like a dog!"

"Softly, softly, sir," said Tobin, "that's a game that two could play at. But there's no occasion for us to sit down to it, at present, while there's better sport in hand for both. Do you know his writing?"

"Whose? Riordan's? Aye, as I should know his face. My desk is full of his accursed and insulting letters. I could not be deceived; what's this?"

Tobin handed him a paper which he endeavoured to read, but his agitation would not suffer him to hold it steady. He held it with both hands—sat down—stood up—and at length was compelled to place it on the table and support his temples on his hands while he read.

It was a pencilled note which contained the following words:

"ESTHER—I am here again in Ireland, the same in heart as when I left it, four years since; If your's have not been changed, say when and where we are to meet.

FRANCIS RIORDAN."

Lacy went to his desk, took out several letters and compared the handwriting with that which he had just read.

"'Tis clear!" he exclaimed, at length; "there is no doubt of this—how did you get it?"

"My cousin Owen—"

"Psha!—hang—"

"Hold, sir, soft words, I say again. My cousin Owen was at Damer's on the night of the wake, and he got it from

one of the servants who had found it in Mrs. Keleher's apartment. You know she was Riordan's nurse?"

"She was—aye—well?"

"Well—that is all."

"And you know nothing of the time nor place in which it was written. Tell me the whole, at once. Rack me not with delay. Remember how he rose against me once; remember how he crossed me, and indulge my vengeance with a speedy answer. Bring me upon him; swiftly, secretly, get him into my gripe, and you shall be my brother from that hour, and share the half of what I own."

"Give me a handsome airnest first, and I'll see what I can do."

"Here is five pounds; speak, now, where is he?"

"Pooh, pooh!" said Tobin, "you talk to me as if I was a magician or a conjuror. I cannot tell you where he is; but I will make it out."

"Do, and I'll make you rich."

"Say no more, say no more. But, do you wish, now, to prevent a shame from bein' put upon the grave of Esther Wilderming?"

"What say you?" cried Lacy, with a vacant look.

"I say the sack-'em-ups are likely to have a houl't of her before morning, if you don't look sharp."

Lacy shrunk back into an attitude of deep horror.

"Who told you this?" he asked, in a low whisper; "but why do I stop to question it? Up, and away! Oh, Esther! oh, my love! my bride!"

"And as for Riordan—"

"Put him before my eyes, that I may blast him! No more till then—"

"'Tis better watch the whole night near the grave—"

"An age; an age, to keep my Esther's clay from harm, to keep the silence of her tomb inviolate. Who dares to wake an echo in the chamber where she sleeps? I'll be her sentinel and guard her slumbers. Oh, that I could lie down and die beside her!"

"To-morrow, I'll go look—"

"For Riordan? Good! I hate him! I hate him, Tobin! —I—" Here he raised himself a tiptoe, lifted his clenched hands, while his eyes seemed starting forth, his whole countenance swelled and glowed and quivered with the bursting



passion, and he flung himself forward upon the table with extreme violence, repeating for the time, with a hoarse terrific energy—"I hate him!"

"I take your word for it," said Tobin, "but there's no time to be lost now, if you choose that Miss Wilderming should rest in peace."

"It is true!" said Lacy, hastily, "I will go at once and make all ready in the yard.—Or go you down, and get the horses ready. Ah, Tobin, I believe my heart is broken; but let my hate be gratified with the destruction of that man, and I will die in peace. I have lived these many years for those two passions—my hate and love. In one, I am forever disappointed; but let me be successful in the first, and I am happy.—I have not lived in vain if Riordan perishes—perishes in the contempt and shame which I have prepared for him. Away, and do as I have said."

Tobin left the room.

"That villain!" said Lacy, changing his manner, and shaking his clenched hand after the informer, "that villain dares to threaten. It is well the fool will let his secrets out. He has taught me caution, and I'll teach him silence! My brain is so confused by all these accidents, that I can scarcely know what I am about. First, Esther's grave—(ah! torment of my soul!)—then Riordan—(may the airs of his native land breathe poison in his throat!)—and then this insolent fool!—Quit of these two, my limbs are all unfettered once again, and free for action. Well, Tobin, are you ready?"

"All is right," answered Tobin, re-entering the room. "I have told them to make the horses ready."

"Come, then, at once, put these pistols in your holster."

"But won't you hear the information about the Hares?"

"Psha! let them pass. When we are laying a trap for a lion, we must not arrange to watch for conies."

## CHAPTER XIII.

It happened, that on the night on which Francis Riorlan had removed the body of Esther from its grave, a number of young gentlemen had left a city, not far distant, on professional business. They arrived at the churchyard while Francis was in the tomb, and left their cartman on the road, where, as the reader is already aware, he was met by the young soldier, and led into a natural error.

On his return down the hill, he found the whole company in confusion.

"Pull up!" said one figure in a drab coat, standing on the stile, "Where have you been?"

"Is that misther John?" asked the man, in a frightened tone.

"It is. Why did you leave the place?"

"No, but is it yourself in airnest, masther John, for I axed the same question of another, an' he made me the same answer, an' sure there was sorrow word o' truth in it."

"Speak low, or you will call the country about us. Well, Tom, what now? Are they coming?"

"Oh, oh, John!" exclaimed a second figure, apparently younger and slighter than the other, "why didn't you tell me what ye were coming here about? I thought it was only to see the ruins! Oh, it is frightful. Don't you remember the old woman of Berkeley?"

The fiend will fetch me now in fire,  
My witchcrafts to atone;  
And I, who have rifled the dead man's grave,  
Shall never have rest in my own."

"For shame, misther Tom," said the cartman, "isn't it a sin for you to be sayin' them things? What noise is that among the graves? Oh, heaven defend us all this night!"

"Amen to that, I say. What noise do you hear?"

"I see them coming," said the figure in the drab coat.

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"Hold your tongue sir, and be of some assistance, if you can."

"Oh, nothing ever horrifies me but the stripping off the shroud."

"Psha, you talk like a coward."

"Why, then, I declare, John, I am not a coward. Surely nobody can call this cowardice. I'd meet any man in the world, in five minutes, provided he was a gentleman, and alive; but when once he loses the power to retaliate, I don't know how it is, but he grows awful. I believe the fact is, I have too much *pluck* to offer any indignity to a man who can't defend himself."

Several other figures now approached in the moonlight.

"We are done!" cried one, "the tomb is broke already. The nest is rifled, and the bird is flown."

Here the cartman interposed, and told of his adventure.

"I told you we should have been here earlier," said one, "that rogue, Duhig, has been here before us. No matter, I'll serve him a trick, some night when I catch him in Bully's Acre."

"Come away, lads, now; there is nothing to gain by stopping here."

"Hold your tongue, sir, or I'll cut the ilium out of you."

"And then," said another, "he may cry out, like the ghost of Hector,

Troes fuimus—*Ilium* fuit."

This jest was honoured by a roar of laughter mingled with deep groans.

"Hush! hush! lads," said the former speaker, "we have no time to lose. Tell me, is there no other job for us to do?"

"There's an ould tythe proctor in the corner, near the cross," said one.

"I never laid scalpel on a proctor but once, and then I lost a fine one."

"How?"

"The fellow's heart was ossified. I broke the blade, making an incision into the *margo obtusus*."

"And why a proctor, now?"

"They're such a set of bone grubbers, their blood grows thick with the phosphate of lime."

"You're so nice in your choice of subjects," said another, "that I suppose nothing would do you but a poet, now, or a writer of romances."

"By no manner of means, good sir. I don't love blubber. *Est modus in rebus.* Those fellows are too soft by half for a young gentleman who is studying osteology. The *os frontis* is nothing but gristle, and as for the thorax, you might as well put your scalpel into a bag of oil."

"What do you say then to a Kerry papist?"

"If you take him in Easter week, it is very well. At any other time, he is no better than an exsiccated preparation of muscles and tendons."

"Yes," said a new voice, "because he has been blooded, too closely, by the Orange leeches."

"Come, come, no politics," said another speaker, "let us leave these things to the herds of faction, to lords, to commoners, to demagogues, and tyrants. Let the fury of civil discord find her way into the camp, the church, the cabinet, the court, the bar; let her teach the cannon to roar, and make the sword blood-red upon the field; or condescend to break tea-cups at the domestic breakfast-table; but let our profession, gentlemen, be superior to her insults. She has already made her way into the chancel; let it be our care to keep her out of the churchyard."

"Hear, hear, hear!"

"Hush! hush!" cried one, "I see some figures stealing down the hill." There was a long shadow flung over the lake at this moment.

A shower of stones, succeeded by a loud "Halloo!" that echoed from cliff to cliff, along the shores of the lake, confirmed the fears which were awakened by this speech. The group dispersed in an instant, and fled up the road, while the cartman, laying on a bastinado of strokes on the crupper of his hack, cantered away like a second Phæton. The country people followed them, to a long distance up the vale, shouting aloud, hurling stones after them, and giving many occasion to regret the state of the law, which compelled the votaries of a science so indispensable to the welfare of mankind, to resort to such modes of following up their investigations.

Very soon after the country people dispersed, Richard Lacy, and his creature Tobin, arrived in the Glen. A

peasant told him of the occurrence just detailed, and he hurried on to the grave-yard, where he had to encounter a terrific disappointment. His despair and rage at finding the tomb of Esther opened, and the body gone, were almost maniacal; and even the burly Tobin had more than once a sensation of personal fear while he stood before him in his ecstasies of anger.

No means were left unattempted to recover the contents of the rifled sepulchre, and none were found availing. With all the bitterness of disappointment, added to his natural intensity of hatred, Lacy, at length, gave up the pursuit, and turned all his attention to the search after young Riordan.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

LET us return to the deserted cottage, in which we left the unhappy young patriot watching the body of his love.

About midnight the effect of his exertions, and long want of rest and food, began to be apparent in his frame. His sense of misery, the keenness of which had, until now, kept off the assaults of sleep, grew vague and dull, and a lulling torpor sunk upon his brain. The wind, which rose as the night advanced, moaned sullenly around the lonely building, and a sudden falling in of the burning fire made him start from his broken slumbers, with a sensation of alarm. Sometimes, the disordered condition of his nerves, without any external excitement, would produce a similar effect, and he would suddenly find himself sitting erect upon the floor, with a horrid sensation, shooting like a galvanic shock from his brain, along his spine, and oppressing, for a moment, the action of his heart and lungs. His visions, when he dreamed, were likewise of a startling description. Now he met Lacy, hand to hand in combat, and was vexed to the soul to find that, while all his enemy's blows told fiercely on his person, his own fell weak and harmless, as if on some unresisting and impassable substance. And now, he occupied that dizzy resting place in the cliff, from which the poor Cathleen was

hurled into the lake ; and Esther, pale in her shroud, stood trembling on the brink beside his couch. He rose to meet her ; her form seemed to fade as he advanced, and her face looked terrible, he knew not wherefore. He attempted to touch her hand, but she receded from him, he followed to the brink of the cliff, she still seemed to float backward in the thin air, and the pale dead face and lurid eye assumed a slight appearance of derision. He tried to follow her ; his footing failed him, and he fell headlong down the rocks, from ledge to ledge, and just awoke in time to save himself from some irrecoverable contusion.

He found David Lenigan standing over, and endeavouring to recall him to consciousness by gently pressing his arm.

"Masther Frank," said this honest fellow, "that's a quare place for you to be lying, sir. Get up, and stretch over on the sthraw, awhile, an' I'll keep awake here by the fireside, until you have a little sleep taken."

Francis sat up, and stared upon his attendant. "I will do so, I believe, Davy," said he "for I am tired almost to death."

They exchanged places, and Francis so disposed himself that he could, to the last moment of consciousness, retain a view of the form and features of the dead. The fire had sunk down, and a gloomier red was cast upon the white and marbly cheek of the maiden. Before many minutes had elapsed, Francis observed that his attendant's head had dropped upon his breast, and that his promise of vigilance was already broken. He strove, therefore, to prevent the access of slumber in his own person, and continued leaning on his elbow, and keeping his eyes fixed upon Esther.

It happened that the attitude of her head, and the mere position of the features, reminded him forcibly of the look she had worn at their parting, when the sound of the imaginary dead-bell had thrilled him with its sudden presentiment. Whatever of resentment had been awakened, by her desertion of him in his exile, was secretly now dissolved in the recollections which this accidental circumstance revived. He thought, if Esther could be now restored to him, he would not even think of questioning her upon the subject. His heart melted, as he remembered the caresses of their early affection ; he felt her sigh again at his cheek, the music of her voice upon his ear, and he sunk, all softened,

down upon his couch, burying his face in his hands, and moistening them with his tears.

A low sound, like that of a deep, short sigh, uttered in the house, fell suddenly upon his ear, and made him start from his incipient slumber, with a wild and tumultuous feeling of alarm. He stared confusedly all around him, but could discern nothing. He looked at the corpse, but it still lay pale and motionless in the same position in which he had, with his own hands, placed it. He gazed upon Davy, who was still fast asleep and snoring loudly. The sound, he thought, might have been merely an intonation of Lénigan's harmonious solo ; but this conjecture was rejected almost as soon as it was formed. There was something peculiar in the sound ; an effect thrilling and startling, such as is said to belong properly to things of supernatural origin. He called to his attendant several times, but found much difficulty in awaking him.

"Davy," he said, "did you hear any thing?"

"What would I hear, mather?"

"I thought there was a sound, just now, as if from some body in pain."

"Oyeh!" exclaimed Davy, half starting up and staring around him, with jaw dropped and eye dilated on the sudden.

Francis remained listening attentively for a few moments. "I believe I was mistaken," he said at last, "it was the wind, splitting itself upon the corner stone, or howling down the glen."

He slept again, and Davy, returning to the fireplace, with many a knowing glance at the darkened corners of the room, likewise resumed his attitude of repose. In a very short time, Francis was once more suddenly awakened from slumber by a confused noise, and the pressure of a strong hand upon his shoulder. Looking up, he beheld his adherent thrown forward on one knee, with one hand gathering his dress about his throat, and a face full of terror, turned back over his shoulder.

"What is the matter, now?" exclaimed Francis.

"The groan, achree—the groan!"

"What of it?"

"What of it, but to hear it, I did ; as plain as I hear you now. Oh, that I may be gray, mather Frank, but we're

kilt an' spoilt alive, the two of us this blessed night. Listen to that."

"To what?"

"I don't know; nothin', I b'lieve. Oh, that I may be gray, master, but I'll rise out of you an' your doin's.—'Tisn't this world alone, but the other along with it, you brought down upon us this night. Oh, wirra, wirra, what'll I do at all, or what'll ever become of us?"

"Be silent," said Francis, "or tell me what you heard?"

"A groan, I tell you; a cry, just as a person would be gettin' aise from a hurt, and would be moanin' lyin' down. That I may be gray, but I thought it is herself was come afther us, an' I'm not misdoubtin' of it yet either."

"Psha!"

"Oh, aye, that's the way, always, when I put in a word, an' sure what hurt if I hadn't to share in what comes of it? but there's the way, always. I folly on every where, like a blind beggar man, an' my word won't be taken for any thing, although I must tumble into the ditch, along with the laidher, when he goes."

"When you have done speaking," said Francis, "will you suffer me to rise? Come hither, Davy, and let us both watch by the fire during the next two hours. It will then be dawn, and we will bury Esther together."

"I wish to my heart she was fairly under the ground again," returned Davy. "Oyeh, d'ye hear the rain? Well," he added, after a pause of several minutes, "she'll be in better luck this mornin' than she was when she was buried the turn before."

"Why?" Francis asked, almost involuntarily.

"Is it an' it powerin' rain? Sure the world knows, sir, that it is a finer thing to be buried of a showery day than of a dhry one."

"Why?"

"Why?" echoed Davy, puzzled at being called on to give a reason for what he had hitherto never heard called in question. "Wisha, then, I don't know, sir, only as they say, that

Happy is the bride that the sun shines on,  
Happy is the corpse that the rain rains upon.

"The ould women would tell you a story, as long as to-



day an' to-morrow, about that very thing, if you'd listen to 'm; but you're in no humour now, sir, I b'lieve, to hear stories."

"Indeed, my good fellow, I am not," returned Francis, in a mournful voice. "It was always my ambition rather to be the subject of a story, in my own person, than to sit me down a simple auditor; and it would seem as if Fortune had taken me at my word, and rendered mine a tragic one."

They relapsed once more into silence, and Francis continued to recall the many circumstances of his life which justified the speech he had pronounced, until his recollections became altogether oppressive. He then suddenly turned round, and bade David to go on with his story. The latter, who felt something of security in the appearance of social communion, complied with great readiness, and related the following adventure, which, though not as imaginative in detail as the *Divina Comedia*, may yet be interesting, as an effect of the same spirit of trembling inquiry, which filled the breast of Dante with its inspiration.

"Why then I will, sir, tell you that:" said David, crossing his feet at full length and lowering his head upon his breast. "A couple, sir, that was there of a time, an' they hadn't only the one son, an' plenty of every thing about 'em. Well, himself was a very good man; he never sent a beggar away empty-handed from his house, he gave clothes to the naked, and food to the hungry, an' dbrink to the dhry, an' every whole ha'p'orth, all to one thing alone, an' that was that he never allowed any poor person to sleep a night inside his doore, be they ever so tired, because his wife was a terrible woman, an' he was in dhread of her tongue. As for her, the only thing she ever gave to any one in her life was an ould tatter'd skreed of a flannel petticoat she gave to one poor woman, an' the sheep's trotters that she used to lave thrown out in the doore to 'em when they'd be crowdin' about it afther dinner.

"Well, it so happened, as things will happen, that the man died; an' if he did, the day he was buried, the rain kept powerin' down equal to a flood, until they had him laid in the grave. An' it isn't long afther until the woman died likewise, an' a finer day never came out o' the sky than what she had goin' to the church-yard. Well, the son was thinkin' greatly, day an' night, about this, for he thought

betther o' the father, a deal, than the mother, an' he wondhered to say she should have all the sunshine intirely, an' he to be drowned wet, an' his people after him, berrin'. Be this, an' be that, says the boy, says he, sthrikin' the jamb o' the door this way with the flat o' his hand, I never 'll stop nor stay, says he, till I find out the raison o' that, or why it should be at all, says he. An' out he marched the doore.

"He walked a sight that day, an' it was just about the dusk of the evenin' when he found himself in the middle of a lonesome wood, an' the sun goin' down, an' not havin' a place to turn to where he'd get shelter for the night. He went in farther an' deeper into the wood, but the farther he went the more lonesome it grew, an' a quare sort of appearance was in the air, an' on the threes, an' bushes, an' the sky, an' all about him. By-an'-by, there was no birds singin', nor a breath of wind stirrin', nor a lafe movin' on the boughs, nor one thing showin' a sign of life, an' still it being the finest counthry ever you seen, only quare an' silent that way. He walked on farther an' farther, an' at last he seen a place among the threes that he thought was a church, only it had a little curl o' smoke comin' up through the boughs as if somebody was livin' there.

"He made towards the house, an' walked in the doore. Well, it was the finest place he ever seen in his life. There was a table laid out, an' a fine fire in the grate, an' all sorts o' cookery goin' on, an' a hale-looking old man sittin' near the table, preparin' his dinner, an' looking very pleasant and happy. Well, this boy, he up and told him what he wanted, a night's lodgin', an' the old man made him come in, an' sit down and tell his story, what it was he was goin' lookin' for, an' afther he heerd it all: 'Well, do you know who is it you have there now?' says the old man. 'I don't,' says the boy, 'how should I know you when I never seen you before?' 'You did see me, many's the time,' says the old man, 'an' why wouldn't you? I'm your father,' say she. 'O murther!' says the boy, 'see this!'

"Well (not to make a long story of it), they sat down, an' ate their dinner. They past the evenin' talkin', an' when it was bed time, the father got up an' walked out, bidding the boy not to mind him, an' left him alone be the fire. The night past away, an' he didn't return, an' at last the

boy got so sleepy, he said he'd thry about the place for a bed to sleep on. He made towards the door, an' opened it, an' if he did, what did he see within, only a fine feather bed an' curtains, and a terrible big dog sittin' down upon the floore, an' lookin' him straight in the face. Hardly he offered to go a foot into the room when the dog flew at him, an' was ready, I declare to you, Masther Francis, to tear him upon the spot. Well an' good, if he did, well became the boy, he moved backwards, an' left the place to the dog, an' took his seat again be the fire, as it might be this way, an' slep away till mornin'.

"When the old man came in, in the mornin', 'Oh, then, father,' says the boy, 'wasn't it a dhroll thing o' you,' says he, 'to lay me in this way all night alone, without a bed to rest upon, or a ha'p'orth, an' I so tired.' 'Ah, my child,' says the old man, 'I could not give you what I hadn't myself!' 'Why so,' says the boy, 'I thought you were in glory, father, aren't you happy?' 'I am happy, my child,' says the old man, 'in all but the one thing, as you may see. I can never stretch my limbs upon a bed, nor sleep under a roof, for ever, during duration; an' the raison is, because I never once gave a night's lodgin' to a poor man in my days on earth, an' all on account of your mother,' says he. 'Oh, father, father,' says the boy, 'an' isn't that a poor case with you?' 'It is,' says the old man.

"'An' I'll tell you now,' says he, 'what's the raison o' the different weather we had the time we were buried, the both of us. Your mother had a fine, sunshiny day; for there was an awful judgment waiting for her, an' that was all the pleasure she was ever more to have, the light of the bright sun shinin' down upon her coffin until they put her in the earth. An' I, for my sins, had it rainin' heavy all that day, for that was all the ill usage I was ever to receive, besides the want of a bed.' 'An' is my mother here, father?' says the boy. 'Put on your hat,' says the father, 'an' follow me.'

"He did; he went afther him into a sort of a back yard, an' there he saw his mother. sittin' down on the bare stones an' gnawin' sheep's trotters, with nothin' on her, to shelter her old bones from the cold, but a little skreed o' flannel, the image o' the one she gave the poor woman. 'There's her fate for ever,' says the old man, 'an' the fate of all that has no charity on earth. But don't cry, my child, until you have more raison; come along, an' profit by what you see.'

"They walked on a piece, an' it wasn't long until they came to a gate, where the old man knocked a while before it was opened. They passed in, an' there the boy seen a great field, with a fog restin' low upon the ground, an' the place all still an' quiet, except that, now an' then, they could hear the cry of young children comin' through the fog. They went on, an' came to a well that was in the middle o' the field, an' there they saw, through the fog, a great multitude o' children pressing about the well, an' dhrinkin', an' sprinklin' themselves with the wather, out o' little mugs they carried in their hands.\*

" 'Those,' says the old man, 'are the souls of the children that died without baptism,' says he, 'an' here they spend their time, without sufferin' pain or havin' any pleasure.'

"They passed on through the field, and came into another, where they saw a sight of fine ladies and gentlemen, walkin' arm in arm, under the shade of trees, an' the sun shinin', an' the place adorned with flowers an' shrubs of all sorts, an' streams, an' every whole ha'p'orth, in grand houses, in groves, an' music, an' laughin', an' dancin', an' the best of atin' an' dhrinkin'. 'Who are these, father,' says the boy, 'that seems to agree so well, an' to live so happy?' 'They are the married people,' says the father, 'that lived up to their duty in the world, that was constant an' thrue to one another in their troubles, that never changed their mind, nor looked afther other people, nor misbehaved in any one way.' 'O vo!' says the boy.

"Well an' good, they passed through that place, an' they came to another; an' as they were comin' near it, they heard the greatest wrangling an' racketin' in the world, callin' of names, an' poll-talkin',† an' cursin' and swearin'. In they come, into a great field, an' there they seen a power o' people, men an' women, haggin'‡ at one another, an' pullin' caps, an' quarrellin' most disgraceful. 'Allilu!' says the boy, 'father, who in the world are these?' 'They are the mar-

\* Probably from some superstition having the same origin as this portion of the curious, and in many instances beautiful, legend above given, the peasantry usually place a small vessel in the coffin with the body of an infant.

† Slandering, back-biting. ‡ Scolding like old women. ::

ied people,' says the father, 'that couldn't agree upon earth, an' as they were so fond of bein' in hot wather in the world they'll have plenty of it here for evermore.'

"Well became 'em, they hurried through that field, an' came to another gate where——"

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## CHAPTER XV.

A WILD cry, a shriek, sudden, hoarse, and horrid, which burst at this moment from the lips of Francis, cut short the progress of the narrative. It was echoed, even before he could perceive the cause, by his attendant, who threw himself off his seat, and rushed in a paroxysm of terror towards the door. Stumbling, however, over some loose furniture, he fell on the straw pallet, and remained trembling, groaning, and crouching downward, while he glanced with a fearful eye on the picture near the fireplace.

After the first cry of wonder and affright had burst from his lips, Francis remained rigid in the attitude into which the sudden passion had surprised him. With hands thrown back, as if in search of some support, with head put forward, with eyes full of a wild and joyous terror, he continued to stare upon the body, which began to alter fast beneath his gaze. One of the hands fell downward, and the other moved upon the bosom. One moment more, and with a heavy sigh, the lips and eyes of Esther Wilderming were visibly in motion.

"She's risin'!" roared David, "that I mightn't die in sin, but 'tis risin' she is to us."

Francis raised his hand, as if to impose silence, and continued to watch the movements of the maiden. Sigh after sigh burst from her lips and bosom; and, at length, the fringed eye-lid rose, and the watery ball became revealed and fixed upon his own.

"She lives! She lives!" cried Francis, springing to his feet, and tossing his clenched hands above his head, while his hair stirred, his eye shone, and his whole frame shook with an ecstasy of delight. "Earth, air, and sea! she

lives! O Death, I thank ye! I thank ye for this gift! My Esther, rise! Arise, my love, my life! Do you know me, Esther? Look on me, my dearest! Do you know your own Francis?"

While he spoke, he had raised her gently in his arms, and laid her head upon his shoulder. He endeavoured with caresses to awaken her to a state of perfect consciousness. but it was a long time before his efforts were in any degree successful. Some words escaped her lips, but they were either wholly unmeaning, or had reference to objects absent. and events long past: she murmured the names of her uncle. and of old Aaron.

"They are near, they are safe," said Francis, soothingly. "dear Esther, you will see them all soon."

"Is Lacy gone yet?" murmured Esther, still in a listless tone.

Poor Francis felt a little pang at this inquiry; but his affections, at the instant, were too keenly aroused to allow the entrance of so ungenerous a sentiment as that of jealousy among them.

"He is near you, Esther; dear Esther, you shall see him soon again," murmured Francis, at her ear, while he again caressed her cheek, and removed the heavy grave clothes from her neck.

Lenigan had now recovered his courage sufficiently to approach his master, bearing in his hand the cloak which the latter had laid by.

"Rowl this about her, Masther Frank, asthore," he said, while his limbs trembled with affectionate anxiety, "rowl the cloak about her, the way she wouldn't be frightened at the grave clothes, afther she comin' to."

"My honest, thoughtful Lenigan, I thank you," returned Francis, while he wrapped the garment around the person of his love, and concealed the funeral garb, as far as it was possible.

"Masther Francis," continued the honest attendant, "I'm thinkin' it will be betther, may be, if you lave her to myself awhile now, as she's comin' to, in dhread she'd be frightened when she'd see you that way of a sudden. Go into the little room awhile, an' when she's herself again rightly, I'll step over for the ould mother, or Harry's wife, an' bring 'em to tend her."

Francis complied in silence, and entered the little apart-  
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ment, where he overheard the following conversation between the awakening Esther and his attendant :

"Stir yourself, a-chree! Stir yourself, Miss Esther, asthore!" said David, in a tone of comfort and entreaty. "Open your eyes an' look about you. Here's the masther an' the misthriss, an' Aaron, an' all of 'em. See, here they're comin' in the doore; look up, asthore, an' bid 'em welcome."

"O nurse, I am dying!" murmured the patient. "Where is the nurse?"

"Here, a' ragal, here, at your elbow. How are you now, Miss?"

"I am very well, nurse, better. Oh, my fate!"

"What ails it a-chree? What is it happened it?"

"Ah, I remember you! I know you well. What a place is this? Why am I here unattended?"

"Make your mind aisy, Miss, an' I'll be bail you won't be long so. Here they're all comin' to you in the doore. Stir up now, a-chree."

"I know you very well," said Esther, rising and looking fixedly in the face of the attendant. "Your voice reminds me of old times, and old friends. Why are you here? What dreary house is this?"

Francis now approached, from the inner room, his face concealed by his hat, and by the deep shade. He signified to David that he should hurry away for the female attendant, and assumed himself the place by the side of Esther which he had occupied before. The anxious girl stretched out her hands towards Davy when she saw him about to leave the cottage.

"Why will you go? Stay with me," she exclaimed, "where are you going? Do not leave me here alone, and in the power of a stranger."

"Oh, then, Miss, if nobody ever injured you until that sthranger would do it, I'd lay my life you'd be the happiest lady on the earth."

A deep sigh from the stranger seemed to corroborate this assurance.

"But wherefore do you leave me?" continued Esther.

"To get the ould woman over, to come to tend on you, Miss. Herself, an' myself, will be back here together in less than no time."

He departed, and Esther sunk back again, with a moan of weariness and pain.

"And who are you?" she said, after a silence of some minutes, "that are left to watch me?"

"A friend," replied Francis, in a low voice.

"But what friend? Let me see your face. My brain is so confused that I can scarcely understand how or why I am here, or what is my condition. I know I have slumbered long, and some strange alteration has been effected in my sleep. I am not at home. I am not among my friends. Oh, speak to me, in mercy! Let me hear some sound of comfort. Where are my friends? Where am I? Who are you?"

"One," said Francis, still in the same deep voice, "who was once accounted a friend, although years and sorrow have changed him."

"And your name?"

"Turn this way from the door. The wind blows keenly in."

"I am very well. Pray, answer me."

"Be more concerned, young lady, for your own health, at this moment. My name is almost a forgotten sound, not worth reviving now."

"Be it as you will," said Esther, "I will not press you. Nevertheless, I am anxious to hear it, for there is something in your voice that moves me like recognition. You have called yourself my friend, and truly say you are forgotten now. And yet I never knew a friend whose name departed from my recollection. Others have ceased to think of me, but Heaven can witness that I was never forgetful of an early affection yet."

Francis paused in deep silence, for some moments after this speech, and then said, with a deep inspiration, and in his natural voice, "Ah, Esther! Esther!"

These words were the first that recalled the heart of Esther to the recollection of its living passions. Immediately her pulses beat freely, and all her senses acquired a vividness of perception that resembled the change from sleep to waking. And with the swift transition, came a new confusion of the intellect, and a new doubt of her position. The fire-light seemed to burn with a brighter hue, the darkness deepened, and the strange gloom that surrounded her once more brought back



the horrible idea that she had in reality changed the condition of her existence. And this impression, in itself sufficiently startling, was rendered yet more fearful by the apparition (as she believed it) of her long perished love, whose face she now beheld pale in the fire-light, and bent on hers with an expression of mingled love and reproach. While she continued to gaze upon him, gasping for breath to speak, and leaning forward on her hands, the latch of the door was raised, on the sudden, and he disappeared in the dark.

Lenigan now entered, accompanied by his brother's wife (the young mother whom the reader lately met at the school), who lifted her hands and eyes, and crossed her brow, her lips, and her bosom, at every step she made. Without any conversation worth detailing, they prevailed on Esther to suffer herself to be conveyed to the dwelling of the schoolmaster, which could afford her means of accommodation somewhat superior to that in which she lay at present. To her inquiries respecting her late companion, they returned little more than those general and evasive answers, for which people in their rank appear to have a peculiar talent. Their humane attention during the night completely recovered her from the effect of that paroxysm of her neuralgic illness which had for so long a time left her in a trance resembling death, and had maintained the latent principle of existence for so many hours even in her coffin.

By one of those inconsistencies of passion, which are so entirely unaccountable, and which, to the unimpassioned, seem hardly credible, Francis Riordan found his feeling towards Esther change the more, the longer he lived in the conviction of her recovery. The night was passed in recalling the history of their old affection to his mind, and, with every remembrance, a feeling of deep indignation arose against his forgetful love. His heart became, at length, so full of a mournful anger, that he refused to go and meet her in the morning, when David came to call him.

"No, Lenigan," he said, "take her back again to her uncle, and to her love, and let her follow the inclinations of her own heart. Why should I see her? Has she not formally deprived me of all right to take an interest in her condition? I will not see her; take her home in safety to her friends."

"Oh, then, Masther Frank, is it afther all you done, to gain a sighth of her in the dead o' the night, in her coffin,

that you turn to now, and say you won't look at her and she livin' ? 'Tis little o' that thought you had, when you were goin' to knock the lid off the coffin last night with the pick-axe."

"It was. But I have changed since then. She was then past all resentment. I could not quarrel with the piece of pale and unimpassioned mould. that lay so cold in my embrace. But here she is alive, with all her sickiness and falsehood fresh upon her, with all her selfish passions at her heart, and I cannot forget my injuries."

"Ah, Masther Francis, sure it isn't in airnest you are. Erra, come away an' see her, an' the heavens bless you."

"I will not go."

"See this ! see this, again !"

"She says she never yet forget an early friendship. Ah, let that love be never counted worth the name that lies coiled up in self so utterly, that its object is by no mark of fondness. or attention, made aware of its existence. Love only can appear in the actions which it influences and inspires. Like Faith, it dies unless we show it in our works."

"Well then, sir," said Lenigan, who listened to this speech with more attention than advantage, "Listen to me now, sir, I advise you. Miss Esther has no notion of any one but yourself, for all she bein' forced to sign to the other man ; an' take it from me, the best o' your play is to go aisy with her. If I know that lady rightly, an' I think I do, all she'd want is the wind o' the world to be off, an' to lave you in the lurch for ever, if you'd say any thing that way. Ayeh, though bein' a methodish, she's as captious as an officer."

Plain-spoken and rough, this homely counsellor succeeded in alarming the affections of his master, and convincing him of the expediency of seeking an interview with Esther, at the least, before he came to the decision of a final parting. Accordingly he bade Lenigan to inform her, that the stranger, who had watched by her the preceding night in the cottage, was now anxious to obtain an interview.

This message revived all Esther's anxieties in an instant. She signified an immediate assent, and prepared to meet him, alone, as he desired.

"It was then no dream," she said to herself, with a degree of agitation similar to that which one feels at the apprehension of a supernatural visiter. There is some news

of Francis. It was no visionary face that stared upon me from the darkness, no fancied sound that called upon my name. And yet, Francis!—alive!—I must not think, until I see this stranger, or else my conjectures will hurry me beyond my sense."

She remained quiet in her chair, until Francis entered. He walked in carelessly and undisguised, as if not deeming it worth the pains to use any effort to practise on her feelings. But the sight of Esther, pale and anxious, in her seat, was too much for his offended pride. She looked piercingly on him for an instant, saw the blood gather beneath his yellow brow, and his eyelids quiver with the wavering passion. With a cry of joy, she sprang from her place, and in an instant, was folded close into the bosom of her early friend.

"Francis! dear Francis!"

"Oh, Esther! my own Esther!"

They remained, during some moments, speechless and motionless, in the ecstatic attitude of reconciled affection.

But this feeling did not continue on the part of Riordan. Esther was surprised to feel herself put away from his arms, and to see him turn aside, and walk towards the window. She looked anxiously after him, and waited for some moments, in expectation of some farther movement; but he remained gazing out upon the gloomy vale in silence. She now walked slowly after, and laying her hand upon his shoulder, said:

"Are you ill, Francis?"

"No," said he, quickly, "not in the least."

"What is the matter then? you don't look well."

"I am quite well; nothing, nothing is the matter with me."

They were silent, after this, for some moments.

"Francis," said Esther, "there is something on your mind. Why do you not speak to me?"

"Me! Esther.—Have I not spoken to you? Have I shown no joy at meeting you again?"

Esther seemed perplexed, and was silent. Francis resigned her hand, which he had taken when she made her charge, and once more turned to the window.

After some moments passed in renewed silence, Esther said, in a half mortified tone,

"I wonder why the woman does not come?"

"She will be here presently," replied Francis, in a tone of forced indifference, "I sent her to find a messenger, that I might make your friends aware of your situation."

"I thank you, Francis."

The young soldier lowered his head with coldness.

After some farther silence, Esther suddenly rose, and looking on Riordan, with an air of dignity and resolution, said :

"Francis, when I knew you, you were accustomed to deal plainly and frankly with me. How long is it that you have learned this reverse to Esther? Come here, and tell me all your history since we have parted. I have already heard the chain of the story from your man, but the manner still seems strange. We were all long since convinced of your destruction."

A look of cold surprise preceded the answer which Francis returned to this speech. He did not know how Esther could make such a charge upon him. Reserve? That was a singular phrase. He had no affairs that could be interesting to her; and as to his history, it was of a piece with the story of his youth, in which she had borne so considerable a part, though the time was now so long past, that she might possibly have forgotten it.

Deeply offended by this haughty address, Esther relapsed into silence, and did not make another effort to renew the conversation. The event showed, that she might have adopted this course with more success at the beginning, for Francis himself was now the first to speak.

He took a chair at her side, leaned his elbow for a moment on the back of that on which she was sitting, and said :

"Esther, it may be a long time before we again have an opportunity of speaking freely together; so I will not suffer the present to go by. Do you remember our parting? Do you remember the circumstances which led to it? Do you remember the pledge you gave me that evening? The promises you made, and the earnestness with which you gave them?"

"I do, I recollect it all well, perfectly well."

"Have you always borne it in mind, Esther, during my absence?"

"Always—I have—I have never known a feeling, Fran

cis, of sadness, or of enjoyment, with which the recollection of that evening was not closely intertwined."

"Indeed?"

"Indeed, Francis—Why do you speak so doubttingly?"

"What—when you gave yourself again away to——"

"Ay!" cried Esther, warmly, "even then, and never half so vividly as then."

"Unworthy girl!" exclaimed Francis, starting from his seat and trembling with rage—"it is intolerable that you should insult me with such an avowal as this. I will never speak a word to you again."

"Stay, Francis—"

"Wherefore, what plea can you have to offer, after such an effrontery as that?"

"I have none," said Esther, "I have no gift at explanations. Where there is no confidence, Francis, there can be little love."

Francis could not contain a burst of wrath at this speech. "Why, Esther," said he, "this is the very tyranny of the passion. I hate despotism, wherever I find it, and will not abide it, even in love. I gave you all that I had in my power to bestow, when I was young and sanguine; and thought myself richly paid, by the assurance of your love. My fortunes changed; I was banished from your presence, and from my native land; and now I come again, and find you—what! do you speak of confidence? Oh, monstrous effrontery!—I find you already half another's, my early love forgot, my long and healthy faith despised; and here you bid me to abstain from all inquiry, and rest upon my confidence alone! What confidence? That your own lips have uttered that which I am not to believe? That you have not forgotten your former promises, and that you are still free to execute all that in those days you vowed?" Is this to be your plea?"

"No, Francis," said Esther, with a troubled voice, "when I spoke of confidence, I did not mean to be strangely interpreted. I meant to say, I had no plea against the truth of your accusation. But, I only needed your confidence, so far as to know, that nothing short of my own acknowledgment would lead you to reject me from your memory."

"And was not that avowal made this instant?"

"Far from it. An admission of deep misery is widely

different from an admission of offence. Come hither, hear me patiently, and you shall be satisfied, if there be any reason in your anger."

The explanation, which followed this speech, was so far successful in appeasing the wounded affections of the young lover, that the schoolmaster's brother, on his return home, was astonished at the warmth of devotion with which the former compensated for his passing indignation. After much debating, it was arranged that Esther's resurrection should still be kept a secret from her friends; and another week beheld the exile and his bride (for such had Esther consented to become), occupying a small residence, on one of those lonely little lakes, which are found among the mountains in the interior of the county. The arguments which were urged by Francis, and which prevailed on Esther, to acquiesce in this procedure, it is not necessary to detail. If nature has not already written them in the heart of the reader, it is not to be hoped that they would convince his reason, however eloquently they might be laid before him.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

RICHARD LACY, in the mean time, pursued his schemes of hatred and ambition with unexhausted vigour. Strangely, to his own surprise and disappointment, he found that his passion for Esther Wilderming had taken far deeper root in his heart than he had at first imagined. Every new honour that he acquired, every new addition that he made to his worldly possessions, revealed to him this truth with still increasing force. He sometimes endeavoured to escape from the depressing recollection, by riotous indulgences, but the very trial was certain to disgust and to recall him. He sought relief in elegant amusement, but the lion in his heart was far too fierce to be confined within a cage of golden wire. He strove to counteract the gnawing grief, by gratifying his animosity against the people of the country, and, still more, by employing every exertion, to discover the lurking place of his old enemy, and bring him within the power of the

laws. But his toils were vain, and his spirits sunk day after day. A gloomy and ferocious melancholy settled on his countenance, and he wandered from place to place, the victim of disappointed love and baffled hate.

His altercations with his creature Tobin now became more frequent and more passionate. The latter, however, usually succeeded in restoring himself to a show of favour, by some mysterious allusions to a certain incident, in Lacy's magisterial life, the memory of which the latter did not seem willing to have revived. Frequently their connexion seemed on the point of being suddenly dissolved, when this mystical threat came in, like an all-powerful mediator, to lull the awakened storm, and to restrain, if it could not remove, the excited passions of the parties.

But all Tobin's misdeeds were forgotten upon the instant, when he made his appearance in Lacy's office, upon one occasion, with an extraordinary piece of news. This was, that Francis Riordan had been seen the preceding evening walking alone on one of the mountain roads in the interior of the county, and that there was little doubt that he might still be found within the reach of Lacy's commission, provided a little diligence were used in finding out precisely where.

This was a species of inquest upon which Lacy had no reluctance to enter. He set out, accompanied by two of his police, armed, and on horseback, and consumed that night and the succeeding day, in unavailing efforts to ascertain the correctness of Tobin's information.

Wholly unconscious of the active measures that were undertaken for the disturbance of their blissful solitude. Francis and Esther were enjoying, meanwhile, the happiness of a full domestic contentment. They had prolonged their residence at Lough B—— beyond the term which was originally proposed, and on the very evening when Lacy was returning from that excursion, which was projected for their confusion, they sat by their fireside, talking of matters indifferent and interesting, according as they arose; of their past adventures, of the state of the weather, which seemed to portend a storm, and of the state of the country which promised little better.

At the desire of Francis, Esther threw open her piano. and sung some verses of the following song, to which he

entertained a liking that had its origin in past associations of place and circumstance :—

## I.

Faded now, and slowly chilling,  
 Summer leaves the weeping dell,  
 While, forlorn and all unwilling,  
 Here I come, to say, Farewell.  
 Spring was green when first I met thee,  
 Autumn sees our parting pain ;  
 Never, if my heart forget thee,  
 Summer shine for me again !

## II.

Fame invites ! her summons only  
 Is a magic spell to me ;  
 For when I was sad and lonely,  
 Fame it was that gave me thee.  
 False she is, her slanderers sing me,  
 Wreathing flowers that soonest fade,  
 But such gifts if Fame can bring me,  
 Who will call the nymph a shade ?

## III.

Hearts that feel not, hearts half broken,  
 Deem her reign no more divine ;  
 Vain to them are praises spoken,  
 Vain the light that fills her shrine.  
 But in mine, those joys Elysian  
 Deeply sink and warmly breathe ;  
 Fame to me has been no vision,  
 Friendship's smile embalms her wreath

## IV.

Sunny lakes and spired mountains,  
 Where that friendship sweetly grew ;  
 Ruins hoar and gleaming fountains,  
 Scenes of vanished joys, adieu !  
 Oh, where'er my steps may wander,  
 While my home-sick bosom heaves,  
 On those scenes my heart will ponder,  
 Silent, oft, in summer eves.

## V.

Still, when calm the sun, down-shining,  
 Turns to gold that winding tide ;  
 Lonely, on that couch reclining,  
 Bid those scenes before thee glide.  
 Fair Killarney's sunset splendour,  
 Broken crag, and mountain gray  
 And Glengariff's moonlight tender,  
 Bosomed on the heaving bay.



## VI.

Yet all pleasing rise the measure  
 Memory soon shall hymn to thee,  
 Dull for me no coming pleasure,  
 Lose no joy for thought of me.  
 Oh, I would not leave thee weeping;  
 But, when falls our parting day,  
 See thee hush'd, on roses sleeping,  
 Sigh unheard, and steal away!"

This performance gave occasion to one of those delicious entertainments, which can only be enjoyed when sympathy of tastes, as well as of affections, occurs, to give the highest finish to the happiness of married life. They brought down favourite authors, compared, repeated, censured, and defended, rallied each other into laughter, and argued without wilfulness, each drawing forth the other's store of talent, and talking affectionately, without the admixture of a single dose of sentiment.

In this condition they were surprised by a visit from the schoolmaster's brother, who had been a frequent guest at their cottage kitchen, since the day of their reconciliation. He had been induced to turn in, he said, as well by his anxiety to learn the condition of Mrs. Riordan's health, as by the apprehension of the approaching storm, the signs of which were every instant becoming more manifest.

Lenigan was taking a tumbler of punch by the kitchen fireside, and expatiating on the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, with respect to the veneration of Saints, when he was summoned to the parlour, by the desire of Francis.

"David," said the latter, "do you remember having broken off your account of purgatory in the middle, on that night, in the cottage, when we were watching together by the fireside? I have got a book here, written by an Italian gentleman of the name of Dante, and it has so curious a resemblance to your story, that I am anxious to hear the end of it."

"What religion, masther, was that Misther Dandy, if it be his name, the gentleman that wrote that book?"

"He was a Catholic, Davy, and not only a Catholic, but a priest."

"Oyeh! Then you may take his word for it sooner than mine, a dale, I'm sure, sir. That is," Davy added, with a nod, "providin' it be downright in the printin'."

“ Well, for the sake of that doubt, David, let us hear the conclusion of your version.”

David complied, and having, at the repeated instances of his patron, taken a chair at a respectful distance, he proceeded with his narrative :

“ Well, sir, afther lavin’ the married people that were so happy together, (may you an’ the mistress have a place among them I pray in the latther end!) they came to another gate, an’ passin’ in, they found themselves in a fine shrubbery, with herbs, an’ furze, an’ undherwood of all sorts in great exuberance. There was a tall rock in the middle o’ the place, and on the very top of it was a goat with goolden horns, and a long beerd, and the hair sweeping down to his hoofs, an’ he browzing for himself on the sweetest of herbage. ‘ What goat is that, father ? ’ says the boy. ‘ Ask himself, child, if you wish to know.’ So the boy med up to the goat, an’ axed him. ‘ If I might make so bould,’ says he, ‘ who are you that has them fine goolden horns upon your head ? ’ ‘ Femoor-na-mown,’ says the goat. ‘ Is it the common robber an’ the highwayman, that I seen prepared for death, myself, in our village,’ says the boy, ‘ an’ that the priest had so poor an opinion of ? ’ ‘ The very same,’ says the goat, ‘ I’m here for ever with plenty of provisions, and a house to sleep in,’ says he. ‘ I never turned a poor man out of my house, while I was in the world, and the Almighty wouldn’t turn me out of his house afther I left it.’ ”

“ Well, the next field they came to, there wasn’t so much as a daisy or a blade o’ grass upon the ground, and the place looking very lonesome, an’ a fat elderly man tied in chains in the middle of it, cryin’ an’ bawlin’, an’ dressed in the dirtiest rags, except the cravat that was about his neck, an’ that was as white as the snow. ‘ That’s a methodish preacher, that’s tied there,’ says the father, ‘ an’ that’s all the clothin’ he’ll ever get for all eternity.’ ‘ An’ tell me, father,’ says the son, ‘ what is it makes the cravat so clean an’ nice, an’ the rest of his clothes not fit to be seen ? ’ ‘ Of a day,’ says the old man, ‘ when he was out preachin’, his servant maid put that cravat on her, as a handkitcher, goin’ to mass, an’ it got a sprinklin’ o’ the holy wather in the chapel, an’ that’s the only clane tack he has on him,’ says he, ‘ for all eternity.’ ”

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"Well an' good, they passed out o' that field an' they came, all at once, into a lonesome wood, with a lake as black as a cloud in the middle, and threes as high as castles hangin' over it, an' not a sound in the place, except a poor man that was wandherin' to an' fro on the bordhers o' the lake, an' cryin' as if all belongin' to him were sthretched. 'Oh, the day!' says he, 'that I sold my child! Oh, brother, give him back to me again! Oh, who will spread my bed, or sing to me, or keep me company, in this lonsome wood, for ever?'

"Do you see that man?" says the father. 'I do to be sure,' says the boy, 'what is it ails him, his cries would move the Danes?' 'That's Peter Duhig,' says the father, 'that lived a-near you formerly. He had a brother that was very rich, an' dhrove in his gig, while Pether hadn't so much as would buy *kitchen* for the plates with his wife an' children. One evening, afther his eldest boy's death, his brother's servant was going for wather, an' he heerd some one singin' most beautiful in the wood. He looked in among the threes, an' there he saw Pether's child, that was buried the week before, rovin' about, singin' and pullin' rushes. 'Erra, is that you, Johnny?' says the servant boy. 'To be sure it is,' says he. 'What are you doin', Johnny?' 'Pullin' a bed for my father, the way he'll have it to lie upon in heaven, when he dies,' says the child. So the servant went home, an' told it to his mather. 'O, then, what luck I had,' says the mather, 'that did'nt marry, like my poor brother, an' have childher to spread a bed for me in heaven.' Well, he went himself to learn was it fact, an' when he did, he med off at once to the brother's cottage, an' offered him a farm, an' money, if he'd only sell him the child, an' never left him pace or quietness, until he took the offer. Well, the next time the servant went out, in place o' hearin' him singin', 'tis cryin' he heerd the child. 'E' what ails you, Johnny?' says he. 'Its little admiration I should cry,' says Johnny, 'an' my father to sell me to my uncle, so that I can't do any thing now for him, but the bed that was laid for him must be given to my uncle.' An' sure 'twas thrue for him, for when the father came to hear of it, he got a stitch an' died, and there's the way with him now.'

"An' now, my good boy,' says the father, 'it is better for you to go no further. for you'll see sights, an' hear

sounds, beyond this place, that would make you a mournful man for ever. Return now to your house, do all the good you can while you live on earth, give alms to the poor, never turn away a beggar from your doore, never gridge a night's lodgin' to a weary thraveller, be regular at mass every Sunday, and at your duty o' Christmas an' Easter, beware of dances and tents at the patthens, an' jig houses, an' benefits, say your prayers mornin' an' evenin', an' hearken to your parish priest; do your duty by your family an' those dependin' on you, take care how you lay out the mains the Almighty gave you, an' my hand to you, the finest bed of down that ever was spread in a king's palace upon the earth is a flinty rock in comparison of the bed that'll be spread for you by the angels in heaven.'

"He said the word, an' led the boy back by another way to the gate of the house, where he entered first. He opened a door in a high wall there, and what was the surprise o' the boy to find himself in his own garden, with the birds singin' an' the sheep bleatin', in the paddock. He went into his house, sayin' nothin' to anybody, and he led such a life after, that the priest himself wasn't a patch upon him for piety."

While the narrative proceeded, the wind had been gradually rising, and now moaned around the solitary dwelling with fitful and uneasy violence. Gusts of light rain beat frequently against the window panes, and the deep purple clouds, that, during the afternoon, lay stored upon the horizon, heaved up their gloomy masses into the midst of heaven, and seemed to marshal their sullen forces, for the elemental war that was expected. The oppressive closeness which was in the air, began to diminish, and faint flashes of a reddish lightning, followed at long intervals by the muttering of distant thunder, were reflected on the bosom of the basined lake, which lay before the cottage windows. Davy Lenigan observed, that the storm would, doubtless, be a great one; for he had seen the earth worms creeping out upon the dusty roads, as he came along, and the smoke from the cottage chimneys ascended straight, and almost without a curl, into the rare and heated atmosphere.

The heavens made good his word. The colour of the lightning shortly changed from red to a pale and vivid blue; the flashes became more frequent and irregular, and the

## THE RIVALS.

As the thunder sounded nearer, louder, and clattered  
on the mountain tops, with short and sudden reverberations.

"There is yet enough of daylight," said Francis, "to see the cascade, and the spectacle would be magnificent in such a storm as this. I will leave you here, Esther, for one hour alone."

Esther endeavoured to dissuade him, but without success. He only took the precaution of avoiding the common roads, on which he had been seen a few days before, by the man who had given the information to Tobin. His apprehensions had been excited by the manner in which the man stared upon him, and he was not willing to renew the danger of such an encounter.

He entered a path, leading through a glen of pine and birch wood, in which the waterfall was situate. A broken stream, half smitten into foam by the long descent, rushed through a bed of massive granite, along the pathway, and downward, toward the lakes. The hiss and roar of the cataract was heard louder and louder among the trees, as he approached, until, at length, emerging suddenly from the leafy screen, he stood in the close area which formed the theatre of its fury. It was a dread and lonely scene. Behind him was the dense wood from which he had just escaped; on his left, a mountain, clad to the top, in rustling birch and pine; and on his right, uprising from the bed of the torrent already alluded to, he beheld a steep, stern and precipitous, and feathered along its brow and sides with branches of the slow-waving larch, which, like the plumage on a warrior's helm, gave a softening character of grace to what would otherwise have inspired unmingled terror.

Before him, in the centre of the lonely chasm, the mighty cataract came roaring and raging downward, over the lofty ledges of rock, now flinging itself in one impetuous mass over the brow of the precipice, now split into a multitude of milky streams, now gathering its force again, and dashing its angry froth against the deep-founded masses of black rock, that seemed to shoulder its strength aside with imperturbable facility; now shooting to one side, now to the other; now, outspreading in a foamy sheet, upon a wide and sloping tablet of the everlasting granite, half screened by hanging trees; and, again, collecting its diffused volume, and falling

heavily with an exhausted plash, over a low ledge of rock, into a deep and troubled basin. Here it spun round in a ceaseless whirl, and hurried onward through the craggy torrent-bed that winded among the trees. The mountains that framed in the deep retreat, and the turf on which the beholder was standing, trembled with the far driven concussion of the mass of waters, and the foliage shivered in the breathless air. The clouds, that gathered overhead, uttered at intervals a stunning chorus to the eternal thunder of the cataract, and the flashes of blue lightning gleamed vivid on the sheeted fall, and blinded the decaying daylight.

It was a feat which Francis had often performed, though not without some difficulty, and even danger, to climb up from rock to rock, through the very bed of the cataract, to the extreme summit, from which its waters were first precipitated into the woody glen. At times, when the river was swollen by the mountain rains, this was an adventure wholly impracticable, and even now, though the stream was far from being flooded, there was more water than there had been on any occasion when he made the essay before. Nevertheless, it seemed by no means hopeless to attempt it, and the temptation was great, to sit upon the dark block of granite at the top, and hear the waters booming upward from the woody covert.

Descending a broken bank, he passed from rock to rock into the bed of the torrent, and soon found himself at the base of the cataract. Without much labour, he succeeded in ascending the first and second ledge. A slight effort was requisite to enable him to reach the shelter of a massy rock, which divided the waters at a little distance above, and afforded a dry standing-place at its foot, whence one might look up and down the fall, with all the thrilling sense of insecurity, and yet with real safety. The altered condition of the stream rendered this undertaking of more difficulty than Francis had hitherto found it, and, when he reached the spot already described, his limbs were warm, his pulses quick, and his nerves excited to an unusual degree. He felt the more doubtful of his strength, as he knew that the upper ledge was incomparably more arduous of ascent than that on which he had but just made good his hold, and returning, by the course he had ascended, was utterly impossible. Dismissing, however, from his mind the consideration

of those difficulties, he leaned against the rock, while the spray was cast upon his brow, and over his dress, and contemplated, for some moments, in silence, the awful splendour of the spectacle by which he was surrounded. The daylight was fast departing, and the extreme vividness of the electric flashes, produced, at intervals, an artificial gloom which made the glen look dark as Erebus.

The rain had long since begun to fall in prodigious quantity. Between the pauses of the thunder, the practised ear of Francis was startled by a sound, low, deep, and distant, which came from above, and in which he fancied that he recognised a well known portent. He bent forward, to listen more attentively, but a crashing peal of thunder, which broke above him at the instant, engulfed within it every other sound, and prevented him, all anxious as he was, from ascertaining the justice of his fear. The thunder died away, and he could now distinctly hear that sound of menace, with a perceptible increase of loudness, and with a noise of rushing mingled with its booming. A sudden pang of unavoidable fear first wrung his heart, and deprived him almost of the power of motion ; and in the next instant, so strange an accession of life and force was in his frame, that he sprang with a light vault over the rock, and ascended very near the summit of the next ledge, by efforts far surpassing any that he could have made under an ordinary excitement. One farther bound was necessary, to enable him to secure his hold upon a horn of the rock above, but his breath failed, and he paused for a moment's rest. Looking to his feet, he saw the yellow tinge growing on the face of the torrent, and the waters seemed to swell. But the lessening light might have given the hue which he feared. He looked up to the summit, a mist steamed upward through the overhanging trees, he sprang and clasped the rock, swung up his person to the crag, and, in the action, caught a glimpse of the terrific mass of yellow waters, bounding with a roar of fury over the summit and down-bursting on his head. Once more upon his feet, another spring, and he twined his arms close around the trunk of a young mountain ash, just as the tawny volume thundered down the steep, and dashed its discoloured foam upon his feet, and on the bank to which he clung, relieved in mind, exhausted and bewildered in heart and brain.

He closed his eyes, for a moment, in a pause of deep-felt gratitude ; and, when he opened them again, beheld the flood burying in its headlong depth, all traces of the path by which he had ascended, and suffering only a few black points of rock to remain uncovered by the yellow foam. Several trees had been felled by the stroke of the impetuous element, and went crashing down the glen. A rock, time-bedded in the aged cliff, was uprooted from its strong foundation, and sent thundering from ledge to ledge, showing its dark bulk at intervals above the hoary torrent, and settling, at last, with a prodigious crash, in the centre of the basin. Out-chorussed on the earth, the heavens themselves seemed now to sink their voices, and their thunders died away with a diminished echo in the abyss of distance.

Turning away from this stupendous sight, he was about to follow the uneven path, which led from the brink of the cataract to the hill-top, when the voice of David Lenigan, apparently influenced by some deep emotion, made him stop short upon his track. Presently, he saw the man hurrying towards him, and waving his hand rapidly with a cautionary action.

"Run ! run ! sir," he exclaimed, "or you are taken ! Down ! down into the wood, or Lacy has you with his Péeleers !"

"Lacy !"

"He is on the hill ; down, down, sir, for the love of mercy !"

Excited as he was, it was easy to change the current of Riordan's passion from that of terror into that of rage. Without returning any answer to the attendant, he hurried up the hill, and appeared upon the summit exactly in time to encounter his enemy, alone and seeming nearly as exhausted, and at the same time as excited, as himself. Each knew the other at a glance, and Lacy sprang from his horse, and abandoned the reins in his eagerness to confront his enemy on even ground.

"We are met again !" cried Riordan.

"Ay," returned his foe, "but not upon the same terms as when we encountered at Drumgoff. Villain, you are my prisoner, at length."

"Mercy forbid !" said Riordan, with bitter force, "I do not feel your fetters on my hands ; I do not see your crea-





tures at my side ; I can defy you, Lacy, and the wo that Fortune has committed to your keeping, and that you never yet refrained from flinging on the head of a beseeching countryman. O, that we should have met after so many years, to wreak our hate in such a spot as this ! For I do hate you, Lacy, as I hate death and pain !”

“ And with good reason,” said his enemy, “ for I would be both to you ! and will, unless the devil should come between. Come with me, and offer no resistance, if you wish not to anticipate a fate, that, by my heart, I am glad to promise you. Ay, by my heart, most glad. O what a curse you’ve always been to me ! Come on, or you die suddenly. Do you remember Roundwood ? Ha ! Do you remember Esther Wilderming ? Death strike me, if I do not hate you deadly.”

“ I take your simple word for it,” said Francis, “ without an oath.”

“ Do you ? You shall have a deed of it, a note of hand, with fifty witnesses ; but the gallows will do better than the whole. Faith, I will hang you shortly.”

“ I doubt not your good will.”

“ Oh, that this cursed law were deep in hell, and I would make that lip incapable of laughter with a brace of balls. I do not wonder at your smirking. I remember you, a cold and passionless dolt, without heart enough to relish the happiness that was designed for you, and the idle hope of which almost put me beyond my reason.—Well !” he continued, suffering his trembling arms to drop motionless by his side, gazing on Riordan, with a look of wonder and contempt, and speaking, as if with his own mind. “ That such a keen-eyed angel should have bent her smiles upon a clod like that ! Her lightest breath, heard through the garden boughs, would make my blood run back upon my heart, and shake my soul down to its foundation ; I have watched for her calm cold salute at meeting and at parting, as I would have done for the tidings of my life or death, and yet I have seen this lump of common earth placed by her side, endure her smiles, her converse, her love-speaking glances, ay, even her caresses, without a change within his eye, or on his countenance. And see now here, if his hate be not as worthless as his love.—Let me be cursed in your friendship,” he exclaimed aloud, “ if I despise you not more heartily for the indolence of your enmity, than I could hate you for the worst evil you

utmost diligence could inflict upon me! I hate and I despise you!"

"I hate not you," said Francis, "more than I hate the reptile that I seek to crush for my own ease, and that of my fellow-men. I could not hate a thing like you, without mind or principle to restrain the animal impulse that bids it sting wherever it can do an injury. And as to scorn, I keep my scorn for those who, in some points at least, can mortify my pride. To you, I can feel nothing, as you truly said, but simple, cold, and passionless dislike."

At these words Lacy glanced to the right and left, and then suddenly levelled a pistol at Riordan. The latter, aware of his intention, sprang at his throat, struck down the weapon, which exploded in the struggle, and then lifting his enemy quite off the earth, hurled him down the slope with great violence. He gazed for a moment upon the fallen man, as he lay stunned at the foot of an old pine, and then, hearing the tramp of horses, hurried swiftly downward through the wood.

The persons who approached were Tobin and the two police men, who had accompanied Lacy. Directed by his moans, as he began to revive, they hastened to his assistance, and conveyed him slowly in the direction of Riordan's cottage.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

ESTHER was standing near the cottage window, and looking out upon the storm-lit lake, when her husband hurried into the apartment, exhausted from his late adventure, and from the speed with which he had hurried downward from the glen. He disguised the cause of his agitation from Esther, and was occupied in quiet converse with her, when they were surprised by the entrance of the servant, to say that there were three Peelers outside bearing a wounded gentleman in a cloak, who had come to request a lodging for the night.

"Not here! not here!" said Francis, in deep agitation.

"Not here, Francis?" echoed Esther, in surprise.

"He is ravin' mad, sir," said the servant; "and the men say his head is touched some way."

"Master Frank," said Lenigan, thrusting his head into the room, "he's abroad, an' a'most dead. If its a bleedher he wants. I have a lancet here in my pocket, an' I'll do the business in a minute."

Francis paused for a minute in deep thought, and then suddenly turning to the servant, he bade the strange gentleman be carried into the little room which lay on the far end of the cottage, and desired that Davy should instantly attend with his lancet, while one of the horsemen rode off for a more experienced medical attendant.

"And now, Esther," said Francis, closing the door after the servants, "what's to be done? This gentleman is an old friend of yours."

"Of mine, Frank!"

"Ay, of yours. And not the least esteemed, nor the least successful among them, neither. This man is Lacy."

"Oh, Francis," exclaimed Esther, suddenly clasping his shoulder, and looking in his face with an expression of mingled pity and alarm, "I hope he is not hurt to danger."

"I hope so too—heaven knows, I hope so too," said her husband, with sincere emphasis. "He received the injury from me, in an effort which I made to save myself from an assault that was made by him upon my life."

Very soon after, Davy re-entered, to say that the magistrate had received but a very slight injury, and that he would, if it were not for the urgency of his attendants, have got on horseback once more with the view of returning to his own abode. Strangely enough, this intelligence of Lacy's safety seemed to restore all his abated hostility to the heart of Riordan. He gave Esther a detailed account of the occurrence which had taken place at the fall.

"He is beneath my roof!" he exclaimed, as he concluded, standing erect, and lifting his hand into the air—"He is beneath my roof, and therefore let him take his rest in peace! He is helpless and a stranger, and therefore let his million crimes be covered, while he stays. For this, I think not of his causeless hate—his unremitting wiles against my fame and life—his bloody practices upon my poor dependants—my own long exile from my native soil—the agony of my return—the loss of the best years of my existence—all these, and

this last treacherous effort at my life, must be forgiven for this night. To-night he is your guest, Esther ; for I will never couch my head beneath the roof that shelters that bad man !”

“ How, Francis ?”

“ Esther, dear Esther, I have not sufficient confidence in my own self-command to stay. If you will have me strive against this feeling, I will remain to please you, but bind me hard, I warn you ! I have an animal dislike to Lacy, a detestation that will acknowledge no influence of reason, and nothing short of physical coercion could render me secure of my self-government. Ah, that this beast should be let forth again to waste the nation of the poor with fire and famine !”

He left the house, after cautioning Esther to avoid the eyes of the strangers, and hurried off to a neighbouring cottage, inhabited by the family of one of his servants. Esther, in the mean time, remained in the cottage in deep perplexity of mind.

Two or three times before midnight, Francis returned on some pretext or another, and Esther thought that at each time there was something paler and sterner in his aspect than before. She questioned him on many subjects, but his answers were vague and absent, and his lip had turned outward, with that hue of livid blue which it wore whenever the heart of the man was wound up to some enterprise of danger. He asked hastily some questions concerning Lacy, paced gloomily up and down the little apartment, and at length turning hastily to Esther, said :

“ Is it not hard that one should be forced to play the cony about one’s own house to avoid the tooth of such a venomed weasel as this Lacy ?”

“ Well, but for one night, Francis.”

“ How the wind howls yet ! ’Tis a horrid night !”

“ His attendants say that he will by no means consent to remain longer than the night.”

“ Indeed ?”

“ And it was with difficulty they prevented his sudden departure on the instant.”

“ I would they had let him go,” said Francis, in a deep tone, and as if unconscious of being heard.

“ And wherefore, Francis ?”

He did not answer the question, but continued for a long time to gaze in deep abstraction on the window. His face, like that of a person struggling to subdue the expression of an intense agony, changed colour several times, and, when he spoke again, his voice was harsh and altered, as if passion could exercise upon the organs the influence of time or of disease.

"Esther," said he, "I have changed my mind. I will not sleep out to-night."

From some undefinable cause, Esther felt a sudden alarm at this new resolution. She imagined that her husband had formed the intention of visiting Lacy, in his chamber, and she could form no idea of any other termination of such a meeting than one of violence and cruelty. After vainly endeavouring to sound her husband's purpose, she resolved to baffle it at all events, by a course of action which had something in it scarcely less hazardous than the rencontre which she feared.

Returning fully to the consciousness of his condition, Richard Lacy passed the night in an agony of disappointed hate, of wild impatience, and of mental torture, in the comparison with which the physical suffering that he endured was trivial. Stretched upon the rack of passion, and stung by the assaults of the direst species of remorse, the sense of guilt intended and attempted, not enjoyed, his imagination magnified the miseries of his condition and awoke within his heart the first thought of fear which he had entertained for many a day.

He believed that his hurt was likely to be productive of more serious effects than were anticipated by his attendants, and many hours were consumed in gloomy meditation on the nature of the change which death might bring to him. That delirious extravagance of passion which made him on one occasion reflect with agony on the possible reunion of Esther and Francis, in another world, now moved him with strong terror on his own account. He pictured to himself the spirit of Esther Wilderming reposing in that paradise, in the existence of which, the course of his early education and the movements of his reason taught him to believe, and he referred, with a wild uneasiness, to the character of his own life, and its probable retribution.

While he thought of these things, sitting dressed in an

arm-chair, he heard one of the servants, an old woman, sing in a low voice, an Irish song, of which the following is a translation. It struck him forcibly, at the time, as it represented a kind of sorrow for which he had often given occasion—the grief of a mother for a perished son :

## I.

My darling, my darling, when silence is on the moor,  
And, lone in the sunshine, I sit by our cabin door ;  
When evening falls quiet and calm over land and sea,  
My darling, my darling, I think of past times and thee !

## II.

Here, while on this cold shore I wear out my lonely hours,  
My child in the heavens is spreading my bed with flowers.  
All weary my bosom is grown of this friendless clime ;  
But I long not to leave it, for that were a shame and crime.

## III.

They bear to the churchyard the young in their health away,  
I know where a fruit hangs more ripe for the grave than they :  
But I wish not for death, for my spirit is all resigned,  
And the hope that stays with me gives peace to my aged mind.

## IV.

My darling, my darling, God gave to my feeble age  
A prop for my faint heart, a stay in my pilgrimage ;  
My darling, my darling, God takes back his gift again ;  
And my heart may be broken, but ne'er shall my will complain.

When the song had ended, and while Lacy lay indulging the reflections to which it gave occasion, a slight noise, on one side of his bed, made him turn round and gaze in that direction. His attendants were sleeping on pallets in the kitchen, after having been plentifully supplied with drink from the parlour, and a deep silence fell on all the house.

Some person had pushed in the door, but seemed unwilling to enter. After waiting for a few moments in suspense, Lacy demanded to know who was there, but received no reply. He waited for a little time and repeated his question, still without effect. A third time, after a long pause, he renewed the query, with some little anxiety of mind, and a third time it remained unanswered. He turned away, rather annoyed, and in the action thought he could discern the fitting of a white dress across the threshold of

the door. He turned again, and saw, indeed, a figure completely attired in white, and with a head-dress which fell down so far over the forehead as to conceal every feature except the chin from observation, and that was paler than the drapery through which it appeared. Even this single indication was sufficient to freeze the blood of Lacy with a terrific recognition, and he sat up in the bed in an access of sudden horror. It needed not the approach of that slow-moving figure ; it needed not the lifting of the rigid hand ; it needed not the removal of that heavy veil ; and the sight of the long pale features, and the glassy eyes that were beneath, to convince the frightened invalid that he was in the presence of the shade of Esther Wilderming.

For a time, his terror swallowed up every other feeling, and he could do nothing but pant and gape and stare upon the figure, while he leaned forward on both his hands, his eye dilated, and his parted lips drawn downward at the corners with an expression of deep-seated horror. His brow became in one minute white, red, moist, and glistening, now cold as earth, and now burning with a sudden fever. A swift convulsion shook every member of his frame, and then it rested stiff and motionless, as if it were struck by a sympathetic death. The light seemed to change its colour, the objects in the room dilated and grew indistinct, the sounds that were before so gentle, that the silence of midnight scarcely served to make them audible, seemed now to have acquired a strange and preternatural loudness, and the sense of feeling became so painfully acute, that the floating atoms in the air were felt distinctly as they settled on his brow.

"Esther," he hoarsely murmured, after several vain efforts to articulate the word, "what is it troubles you?"

She raised a hand, as if with a cautionary action.

"Speak to me!" said Lacy, still in deep agitation, "speak to me, though you loved me not in life. Oh, Esther, speak at once—if you are ill at ease, and there be any thing in Lacy's power to give you peace, ah, make him blessed by telling it."

As he raised his voice, in the vehemency of his adjuration, the figure slowly repeated the former action. Lacy started back, in sudden terror, at every movement of the spectre, and felt a difficulty in mustering his spirits again to address it.

"The innocent," he said at length, in a low and earnest voice, "the innocent, it is said, fear ye not. I have not that security. The blood of many victims, the sufferings of youth, the tears of age, the groans of severed hearts, and homes bereaved of joy, the memory of passions long indulged and feasted upon crime and human woe, all these surround me in this fell extremity, and tear away my trust in days gone by. I have not the security of innocence, and yet behold, my Esther, I fear not you ! All terrible as you are, wrapped in the pomp of death, and clothed in all the horrors of the grave, I fear not you, my love ! though my limbs tremble, and my nerves are dragged to agony, though my eyes wander, though my speech grows hoarse, and though the blood is thickening at my heart, I fear you not, I love you through my fears ! Oh, by these trembling limbs, this scared and terrified, yet doting heart, these eyes that you have long bereft of light, I pray you, Esther, speak to me ! Come nearer, though it be to blast me——Come !—— I will not believe that you would injure me, for you were ever gentle and forbearing, and where is the hand that could inflict a pain upon the heart that loves it ? But, whether you be come in anger or in love, in mercy or in vengeance, yet welcome to my presence, Esther Wilderming. In hate or in affection, in life or death, I have still a horrid rapture in your company."

He paused suddenly, as the figure again elevated one hand and seemed about to speak. Still as a statue, he remained with his eyes riveted upon the parted lips of the appearance, while the words came forth, distinct and low, and almost without a motion of the feature.

"Hear me !" said Esther.

The first accents of her voice made Lacy shrink quickly down, like one who is startled by a sudden and terrific sound.

"I am your friend, and come to warn you," continued the figure. "Arise, and leave this house."

"Wherefore ?"

"You are in danger. Wait not one other hour. Depart in silence and with speed."

"Who is my enemy ?"

"That must not be revealed. But you have many. I would not leave you in the danger of any one's revenge."

"I am guarded, Esther."



## THE RIVALS.

Silence and the night are fearful to you. Revenge can use the noiseless march. It grows in secret, it walks in silence, it strikes as rapidly, it strikes as deadly and as surely.

You are come then, kind and gentle shade, to save me worthless as my own?"

I never wished you ill, and do not now. Richard, if you have valued my entreaties, refuse not to comply with this. Arise with secrecy and diligence, and leave this house at once."

"Behold, I obey you on the instant, Esther. Yet stay!"

"Hark! some one stirs!"

"The house is silent."

"Speak quickly, then, and low."

"Tell me if you are happy."

Esther sighed.

"Oh, hide not from me any thing of your condition, Esther. Tell me by what strange toils, what prayers, what sufferings, I yet may hope to meet you in a happier world. Tell me, and though you bid me to surrender all my earthly schemes of glory, though you should bid me shake Ambition off, and cease to dream of power and wealth and honour; though you should make my path in life a waste, teach me to curb my fiery impulses; nay, though you charge me to surrender that first passion of my life since you were lost—my hate of him who was my rival in your love—I will cast all away upon the second—and be an humble, pale, poor, passionless, and self-tormenting penitent, wasting my noons and nights in prayer and agony, and only living on the hope of meeting you in peace and happiness. Where dwell you, in what land, for there must be the limit of my wanderings?"

"Vain man!" said Esther, after contemplating the enthusiast for some moments with an expression of mingled pity and severity, "Mistaken man, how passion has eaten up your understanding. It is not by a motive such as this, so earth-born, so self-interested, that you can ever hope with justice to influence your fate in the hands of Him who is to judge you. Dismiss from your remembrance all thought of these intemperate passions, to which you have sacrificed so

much of your own and of others' happiness, repair the wrongs you have inflicted, redress the misery you have occasioned, dry up the tears that you have caused to flow, light up the hearths you have made dark and lonely, and do all this, not for the love of earth and earthly passions, but for the sake of virtue and its Author."

"You speak to one," said Lacy, "insensible to such a motive, insensible to all, except that one absorbing passion which has diffused itself throughout his whole existence, and become, indeed, himself. The time has long gone by when I could think so anxiously of death. Its terrors have grown stale upon my fancy, and now, my conscience seldom hurts me that way. If I cannot be virtuous for your sake, I never can be for my own."

Here the figure started slightly, as if in alarm, and assumed for a moment the attitude of close attention.

"I must depart:" were the next words of Esther; "Farewell, delay not long beneath this roof; and oh, remember my injunctions."

"Hold!" cried Lacy, aloud, and springing suddenly to his feet, "you have not answered yet my single question."

"I cannot now."

"Ah, Esther, leave me not unsatisfied. You shall not pass!" he added, with a rapid wildness of manner, as the figure glided toward the door.

She raised her hands and laid one finger close upon her lips as if enjoining silence. Lacy obeyed the signal, but would not abandon his place between her and the door. At that moment a sudden noise in the next room made him start and look around. When he again assumed his former attitude, the apparition had fled. He saw only the shimmer of a white dress through the darkness, and in the next instant was alone.

Exhausted by the exquisite degree of excitement to which his feelings had been just wound up, he sunk down, powerless, into a chair, his arms hanging drearily to the ground, and his head depending on his shoulder. In this condition he was once more startled by the entrance of one of his men, who had occasioned the noise already mentioned. In so feverish a state the slightest appeal to an external sense acted on his frame with an electric violence. He leaped up once more from his seat, confronted the intruder, who

was no other than his creature Tobin, and, finding his terror vain, burst suddenly into a passion of rage.

"Ruffian!" he said, "how dare you break so rudely on my presence? Who are you? What's your business?"

"Ha!" said the intruder, "ruffian, Mr. Lacy! That's a strange word to apply to a person of respectable connexions."

"Ah, Tobin, I knew you not."

"What is the matter, sir?"

"This house!" said Lacy abstractedly, "what danger? from what hand?"

"I heard a noise in the room, and I thought I'd just step in to see whether you wanted any thing."

"Tobin, come hither."

"Here's Tom Tobin, ever ready at a call. What's your will?"

"Who is the owner of this house?"

"A Mr. Johnson, I think; some fellow of low English extraction, I suspect. A fellow of no family. And yet 'tis such fellows that live in such little elysiums as this, while the Blakes, the O'Donnells, the Fitzgerald's, the Butler's, the O'Shaughnessy's, the O'Tooles, the O'Lones, the O'Doneghues, the M'Carthy's, the M'Gillicuddys, and all the cream and top of the old Irish nobility are scattered over the country, hedging and ditching, and tilling, as hired labourers, the lands which their ancestors won in fight, and held from father to son at the point of the sword. But so it is:

Since every Jack became a gentleman,  
There's many a gentle person made a jack."

"Tobin, I did not know you when you entered."

"Enough said: gentle blood is quickly up, but gentle speech will soon allay it, sir."

"I must leave this place to-night."

"To-night!"

"This very instant."

"And your hurt?"

"It is almost well. It need be no obstruction. Let us come silently and with secrecy, for there is danger in the place. Away!"

Silencing the remonstrances of Tobin, Lacy pressed forward into the room where his attendants were sleeping in chairs around the fire, and waked them up with caution. Signifying his wishes rather by actions than by words, he made them comprehend his intention of departing instantly. The servant who had received directions as to his conduct from some sufficient quarter, appeared among them at the moment, and assisted in getting their horses ready, and making all preparations for their departure. A few minutes only elapsed before the echoing of their horses' hoofs had ceased to clatter along the lake and against the opposite mountain.

In returning to the house, the servant encountered his master, standing on the kitchen floor, and apparently in stifled agitation.

"Where are the strangers?" he said, in a low and subdued voice, while his eye was fixed with an expression of sternness upon that of his servant.

"They are gone, sir," said the latter.

"Who bade them go?"

"Themselves, sir, to come an' call for their horses an' be off."

Francis paused for a considerable time, as if undergoing a passionate mental struggle.

"Where's your mistress?" he asked at length.

"She is within, sir, readin' in the parlour."

"What did that gentleman say at parting?"

"Nothin' to me, sir."

"Go, go to your bed."

The servant left the place.

"It is better as it is," Francis muttered to himself, after a long pause. "I wished to have some conversation with him in his mood of suffering, but I am glad that it has happened otherwise, I could not answer for my heart when I beheld him lying in my power with all his guilt, committed and intended, hot upon him. It is better we did not meet."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

ABOUT a fortnight after this event, Francis was returning late in the evening through the village of Roundwood, when a sudden and heavy descent of rain compelled him to take shelter at an inn on the right hand. There had been a fair in the neighbourhood, and the house was full of guests.—The light, from the windows and the open door, streamed across the street, making the rain drops sparkle as they fell into its beams. The sound of mirth was loud within the house, and the uproar was but slightly diminished when Francis made his appearance. Wrapped in a white great coat, and with his hat drawn low upon his brow, he passed unrecognised among the crowd, and gained a distant corner, shadowed by the projecting porch of the fire-place, whence he might contemplate all the company, without incurring the observation of any.

The landlord was busy in his shop. A large fire sent light and heat through the room, and shone on many a merry countenance. On one side of the fire-place were a number of young men and girls, laughing loudly, while on the other sat a number of middle aged men, who were carrying on a graver conversation, in which, nevertheless, many appeared highly interested. The usual centre of attraction, in such scenes, a table and vessels for drink, was not forgotten here, though many preferred to sit apart, each with his own brown fount of inspiration, and worship Bacchus in Montmellic Ale.

“No Saint Pathrick!” exclaimed one old man in a tone of surprise, while he gently moved the liquor in his pewter drinking vessel, “that’s a dhroll thing.”

“Why then it is,” said another, “an’ I heerd it, for all. I heerd Mr. Damer, over, prove it out of a book, that there wasn’t such a man at all there, nor no talk of him, at the time.”

“What’s that you’re sayin’ Phil?” asked a hoarse voice from the corner.

“That Saint Pathrick was never there at all, he’s sayin’,”

replied the old man, turning round with a smile, as if in hope of finding some successful counter-argument.

"Saint Pathrick, eroo?"

"Iss, then."

"Erra, howl."

"Faix, I'm in airnest."

"An' what's more, I believed him too," continued the retailer of the paradox, "until I was talking of it, afther, to Misther Lenigan, the Latin taicher, an' he made light of it, in a minute, for sure, says-he, if there was no Saint Pathrick, what did they build the old ruins for? an' if they were built by any body, mightn't it as well be Saint Pathrick as any body else? Eh, now, Jerry?"

"It stands to raison, what you say."

"Erra, I wouldn't mind a word one o' them convarthers would be sayin' to me," said a young man who had got his arm round his sweetheart's waist, "they have arguments that would bother the Danes, an' you'd think the world couldn't gainsay what they'd tell you, an' when you'd be listenin' to the Priest, afther, before two minutes, he wouldn't lave 'em worth a button. I'd rather be talkin' to Mary here, be'r two selves, a-near the fire-side, than to hear all the convarthers in Europe."

"Ayeh," said Mary, tossing her head incredulously.

"'Tis throe, I tell you."

"Ayeh, talkin' is aisy, Jim."

"M'asthore you wor—

Your eyes, 'tis true, are a sweet sky blue,  
Your cheeks the hue of the crimson rose;  
Your hair, behold, does shine like gold,  
In flowing rolls, it so nicely grows.  
Your skin is white as the snow by night,  
Straight and upright is your portly frame;  
The chaste Diana an' the fair Susanna,  
Are eclipsed in grandeur by my lovely dame."

"Well, it's all one," said an old flax dresser, in a corner, "these converts—"

"Perverts, you should call 'em," interrupted a new voice, which was no other than that of Lenigan, "'tishn't converted, they are, but perverted, the heavens look down upon 'em."

"Perverts, then, if it be perverts. I say there isn't one

o' them but what comes round again in the latter end.— When the world is slippin' away from undher us, heaven save us, it is then the truth will break out for all."

"Its true for you," observed a smith, taking a pipe from his mouth and knocking off the ashes with the tip of his little finger, "there's that Tobin, that turned to plase Lacy, the magisthrate, he's for turnin' again now, to plase himself. He came to me a couple o' days ago, down to the forge, to get a nail dhruv in a loose shoe, an' I never heerd but how he talked o' Lacy. Some argument they had about money, that Tobin said was owin' to him, an' Lacy wouldn't pay it."

"Shasthone!" said the first speaker, "its a good sign for the counthry to have 'em breakin'!"

"Indeed," ejaculated the smith, "that same Misther Lacy will be in a place yet where the tip of his finger will light his pipe for him, if he doesn't change his behaviour."

"He couldn't do worse, himself, than to judge you, Tom," said Lenigan, whose eye had just began to twinkle in the corner, "not if he was a Turk."

"Why then, of all men, Davy, it doesn't become you to take his part, that knows well the way he dealt with a gentleman that was good to you once, Masther Frank Riordan."

"Don't speak of it, don't speak o' that, at all, Tom, I beg o' you."

"An' sure there's the poor Hares, that are lodged in the Bridewell this very day for night-walkin', an' that'll never get out of his hands again, until they are hung."

"The hares in Bridewell!" exclaimed Davy, in strong surprise.

And Francis started, too, and listened in awakened interest, for in this name he recognised that of two poor fellows whom he had formerly rescued from the tyranny of Lacy. He felt a double interest in their fate, as he knew that it was his success in their cause which contributed to confirm the hatred that Lacy had conceived against him upon other grounds. That circumstance was now nearly five years past, and he wondered at the inveteracy of spite which could seize an opportunity of vengeance after the lapse of many years.

"They were taken this morning," continued the smith, "makin' an attack upon Tobin in his house. The whole

world wondhers, for there wasn't quieter people goin' than the Hares, an' they tenants of Tobin, an' wantin' an abatement of him this time back. They're to be examined to-morrow at the petty sessions before Mr. Damer an' Mr. Leonard, two gentlemen that'll show 'em fair play, for all bein' protestants."

"He's a terrible little man," said the flax-dresser. "They say he had a dale to do with this new Vesthry Bill act, that's come out lately."

"Aye, an' the Sub-lettin' Act," observed the old man already alluded to as the first speaker.

"Them two acts," said Davy, "are nothing less than, as I may say, the two jaws of a demon that are to grind away the good of Ireland into nothing, between 'em."

This vigorous sentiment set on foot a stormy debate upon those two famous pieces of legislation, which proceeded to an extreme degree of violence. Davy, as he had struck the spear into the dwelling of the tempests, so he used every exertion now to pacify the tumult he had raised. He stood up, waved his hands, looked around him with an imploring eye, but all his gestures were unheeded amid the zeal of political discussion. At length, finding that nothing in a colloquial way had the slightest chance of producing an impression, he threw himself on a sudden into an oratorical attitude, and shouted out an astounding—"Gentlemen!"—

A dead silence immediately fell upon the circle, for the voice and the sight of an orator exercise upon such people an influence as powerful as that which the great Patron of the art was accustomed to use on the shores of the ancient Erebus. All eyes were turned on the speaker. All tongues were hushed, all passions quelled upon the instant; the uplifted pewter hung suspended in mid-air; the frolic swain, forgetting the kiss for which he had been struggling, looked backward over his shoulder and relaxed his hold around the person of his screaming love; the landlord hobbled, smiling, from behind his counter; the pot-boy forgot his vocation; the very dogs and cats relinquished their altercations; the expectation of that treat so precious to Irish ears, an oration, lulled every heart to silence, and mute attention sunk suddenly upon the scene.

"Gentlemen," continued Davy, preserving the lofty



oratorical key, "will ye hear a word from me upon those bloody and inhuman statutes?"

Continued silence, only interrupted by a murmur of something like assent, seemed to inform the speaker that the company were willing he should be heard.

"I am glad, gentlemen," resumed the orator, "to see by the zale ye show in your discourse that ye are roused at last from that sleepin' *liturgy* in which ye were lulled so long. Although it is nearly impossible for me to add any thing to what many other gentlemen have already said, to-night, round the table, I, for all, cannot with silence pass over the late achievements of our countrymen, without making some remarks an' observations of my own [here there was a murmur of something like approbation, in which all joined, except the smith and the other great man, the seneschal of the parish]. We surmounted the times, gentlemen, when the priest was hunted with more diligence than the ravenous wolf, an' as for the schoolmaster—[there was some tittering among the girls]—an' as for the school-master, he was searched for as a vigorous sportsman, on the banks of the Nore, would search for his game; an' they would be as happy, when those would have the misfortune to fall into their hands, as the dejected traveller on the deserts of Africa when ready to expire with thirst, and would just meet a pool o' wather. [Some applause]. But, friends, for what purpose did they so diligently seek them? I will tell you! To wreak their vengeance on those necessary members of society. [Applause more decided]. The time is now past when the poor bewildered Catholic, in his state of starvation, would not be allowed to keep a horse worth more than five pounds, and when he would not be allowed to keep one foot of the land of his fore-fathers under a lase, an' even spakin' the language of his country was a crime. [Applause.] Now, spakin' in truth, they repaled these dismal, unpolitical, laws, not for any feelin' o' friendship or humanity towards us, but merely to secure the pace o' the Empire, an' to remove the disgrace they received in all the polished Courts o' the known world they visited, as they looked upon them as base, savage, and unpolished people. [Energetic applause.] But, gentlemen, I have now a word or two to offer upon a subject in which every Irishman must feel an interest, I mane the state of our population. Our enemies lately enacted

two statues, just intended for our destruction, the one called the Vestry Bill Act, the other the Sub-letting Act ; the former intended to impoverish us, the latter to stop our growing population. [Cheers.] But, friends," continued the orator, warming with his success, "will you hear to my opinion of this statue ? I conceive it to be worse than that enacted by Pharoah when he commanded that the male children of the Israelites would be destroyed, for this act, of which I speak, destroys them both male and female, [tremendous cheering,] by preventing the honest husbandman from sharing his spot of ground with his industrious children, and that it is well known that the more the ground is cultivated the more fertile it becomes. But let them remember, the more they decrease our population, their own empire becomes more defenceless, for, let it be inquired of his Excellency the Commander in Chief, whether the Irish fought as brave as any English or Scotch troops ever under his command in all his expeditions ? [Cheers.] Let them, on that footing then, continue the sub-letting Act, if they like to become a prey to some Napoleon, or some other haro of his kind. [Cheers.] Then they will feel the fruits of their own doin's, when we will be too old to wield the sword, an' they will have no youngsters to enter the service. [Great cheering.] It is, then, that the sovereign of England will have to say, as his Majesty George the Second once said, when he expressed, 'Cursed be the laws,' says he, 'that prevents my own subjects from fighting in my own service, an' secures victory to my enemies.' With this deference, that we will have no youngsters to fight in any service whatever. [Immense cheering.] As for the Vestry Bill Act, the people that made that statue did not consider that if the ministers o' the Church would be so base as to put it in execution, their own rents would be unpaid, an' they would in the end fall by their own doin's. But, friends, I have said enough upon the subject, as I am thresspassin' too much upon your time, [No ! no ! tremendous cheering.] for to recite our wrongs would cost an author, let alone me, a long life. Therefore I will conclude by telling you that the surest and most expeditious way to break all those chains, is to live peaceable with those savages that daily want to raise us to rebellion, to observe the laws in the strictest manner, to avoid night-walkin' as the root of all our misfortunes, and

of all the world, to beware of any secret societies, for I can assure you, with truth, that all who belong to any such community are of little consequence in any concerns, unless in violating the laws, an' going headlong to the gallows."

And, with this pointed peroration, Lenigan sat down, amid loud and long continued applause.

Soon after, as the company became more mirthful, Apollo was invoked to give additional grace to an evening which had been already brightened by Mercury and cheered by Bacchus and Cytherea. In humbler phrase, several songs were sung, the greater number of which owed their principal fascination to a political or controversial meaning hidden beneath the apparent sense. Sometimes a fellow sung the adventures of a mouse, which was sent off from Ireland to the British senate, where

The Nobles all, both great and small, did wonder much to see  
A mouse so small from Ireland, seeking for liberty.

There was a cat within that house, an' to the mouse did say,

'I doubt you are a stranger, I believe you're goin' asthray.

'I think you are a paddy mouse, an' when did you come o'er?'

'This mornin', sir,' replied the mouse, 'I landed on your shore.

'An' if I am a paddy mouse,' the mouse to him did say,

'I doubt you are a buckish cat, an' I'm not goin' asthray.

'For I'm a son to Graunia, that sore laments for grief,

'An' she sent me to his Majesty, to grant her some relief.'

And then the company were favoured with "The lamentation and jail groans of Jeremiah Hayes, for the murder of Ann M'Loughlin;" "A new and much admired song on this present Parliament, and rising prosperity of Ireland;" "Shauna Grien's meeting with Graunia;" and other melodies equally significant in their apprehension.

"Come, Misther Davy," said the young foe to all 'convarthers,' "give us somethin' sportin' now. 'Tis you that can sing a good song, you know, when you have a mind."

"Erra, howl."

"Faix you can."

"Do, Misther Davy," said the smith, "if it isn't makin' too bould to throuble you."

"No offence; oh, no offence in life, Tom; but I declare I'm smothered from a great cold in my throat this time back."

"Ayeh, that's the way always with the fine songstherers."

"Faix, it isn't o' purpose I speak; but I'm sure I'll do my best, an' what can I do more?"

"'T would be hard to ax you."

"Were obleast to you, Mither Davy."

"I'll sing you a song, then," said Davy, suddenly throwing off his reluctance, "about a set o' people that's very desarvin' for indushty, an' that's the Peelers. For what would the counthry do at all, if it wasn't for 'em? 'Tis they that airn their money well. There isn't a mouse can squeak; there isn't a calf can blate; there isn't a hen can clock a-near 'em, but they must know what raison! I'll engage there's few pigs unring'd, or goats unspancelled, since they come in the counthry; an' I'm sure there's nobody that saw the state o' the high roads but will allow there was no ho with the pigs until the Peelers come into the barony."

And with this encomiastic prelude, Lenigan launched out into his song:

## I.

A Banahee Peeler went one day on duty an' pathrollin', O,  
He met a Goat upon the road, who seem'd to be a sthrollin', O,  
Bayonet fixed, he sallied forth, an' caught him by the weazand, O,  
An' thundered out an oath that he would send him to New  
[Zealand, O.

## II.

Mercy, sir, exclaimed the Goat, pray let me tell my story, O;  
I'm not a thief, a ribbon-man, a croppy, whig, or tory, O;  
Banshee is my dwelling place, where I was bred an' born, O,  
Descended from an honest race, its all the thrades I larned, O.

## III.

It is in vain for to complain, or give your tongue such bridle, O.  
You're absent from your dwelling place, disorderly an' idle, O;  
Your hoary locks will not prevail, nor your sublime oration, O;  
You'll be thransported by Peel's Act, upon my information, O.

## IV.

Let the consequence be what it will, a Peeler's power I'll let you  
know.  
I'll handcuff you at all events, an' march you off to prison, O.  
You villain, you cannot deny, before the judge or jury, O,  
On you I found two pointed spears a threat'nin' me with fury, O.

## V.

I'm certain, if you were not drunk from whiskey, rum, or brandy, O.  
 You would not have such gallant spunk, to be so bold an' manly, O.  
 Ah, says the Goat, you'd let me pass, if I had got the brandy, O;  
 To thrate you to a sportin' glass, it's then I'd be the Dandy O.

This satire, extravagant as it was, upon a hated race, was received by the hearers with a degree of enthusiasm which it is difficult to represent in language. Shouts of bitter laughter, and execrations sent forth between the clenched teeth, showed plainly what a popular subject the satirist had chosen for his target, and how well the singer knew his audience.

"Love-songs there were, the eternal burthen of which was inconstancy and wo. The gay and light-winged Cupid, who laughs, and waves his pinions with such a joyous levity around the lyre of the national lyrist, was here the very same in sentiment, but floating on a coarser plumage, and with the evil-spirit not so well concealed.

The rain however had now abated, and Francis had left the house, with the intention of adopting some mode of rescue for his ancient clients, though none as yet appeared consistent with his own safety. As he put his horse to a gentle trot, the bursts of wild applause came frequent after, and between, the voice of a young girl who had been prevailed upon, all bashful and unwilling as she was, to delight the ears of the company with the song of the Green Bushes :

I'll buy you fine beavers, a fine silken gownd,  
 I'll buy you fine petticoats flounc'd to the ground,  
 If you will prove loyal and constant to me,  
 An' forsake your own true-love an' marry with me.

I want none of your beavers, nor silken hose,  
 For I ne'er was so poor as to marry for clothes,  
 But if you'll prove loyal and constant to me,  
 I'll forsake my own true-love an' marry with thee.

Come, let us be going, kind Sir, if you please,  
 Come, let us be going from undher these threes,  
 For yonder he's coming, my true-love I see,  
 Down by the Green bushes, where he thinks to meet me.

When her true-love come there, an' he seen she was flown,  
 Oh, he stood like some lambkin, that bleats all alone :  
 She is flown with another, and forsaken me !  
 Oh, adieu the Green bushes for ever ! said he.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

As he rode homeward in the dark, within a few miles of his own residence, he was hailed by a figure on the road side, which, on nearer approach, he distinguished to be that of a young woman. She waved her hand anxiously several times, and seemed impatient for his approach.

"Is that you, docthor?" she said, as he came nearer, "Hurry in, hurry in, an' the heavens bless you! You never will overtake him alive."

"Whom, woman?"

"Didn't James tell you, sir? A man of Mither Lacy's, that was servin' a process in the mountains, an' a poor man that was in the place had the misfortune of killing him."

"A man of Lacy's?" exclaimed Riordan, "bring me into the house immediately. "I am no doctor, my good woman, so lose no time in sending for one, if you think it necessary."

He dismounted, and led his horse along a narrow bridle road, following the steps of the woman, who trudged along with the tail of her gown turned up over her shoulders, giving him at the same time an account of the accident which had taken place.

"He was a very foolish man," said she; "it was only this morning he took up two boys o' the Hares for night-walkin', an' nothin' could do him after, but to go into the mountain to serve a process upon one Naughtin, a first cousin of their own. 'M sure what could he expect? They gathered about him, and one of 'em knocked him down, and another made him go upon his knees, and ate the process, an' swally it, an' take a dhrink o' wather after, to wash it down; an', after that he got a blow of a stone, from somebody or another, that destroyed his head, an' indeed I'm

asfeerd he never 'll do. Ah, sir, 'tis a frightful thing to see a man in that state when he isn't aizy in his mind! I wished he had the priest, poor creature, for he's one o' them that *turned*, an' I declare I feel for him."

They reached the cottage, which was crowded with the country people. The wounded man was lying in an inner room, which, likewise, was thronged as full as it could hold. Looking over the shoulders of the crowd, Francis could just discern the bed on which the unfortunate wretch was laid, and around which a number of faces were gathered, some wearing an expression of compassion, but by far the greater number evincing either simple curiosity or a grim satisfaction. The light of a small candle, the end of which was crushed against the wall for the want of a better candlestick, threw a dead and perplexing light upon the group.

"Is the doctor come?" said the wounded man, in a tone of deep suffering, "is there no compassionate soul here that would get me a docthor, to see am I to die or to live?"

"He's sent for," said an old woman, "he'll be here immediately."

"The Lord forgive you!" said another, "many's the time you made work for the docthors yourself, before now, an' the surgeons, an' the undhertakers too."

"The Lord forgive you!" said a third, "the second year isn't gone by since you swore away the life of my poor husband for nothing, and left me this way in rags, an' my children fatherless, an' houseless, an' apprenticed in their youth to beggary!"

"Oh, let the Lord forgive you, if he can!" exclaimed a fourth. "I had two brothers, as strong and handsome as were ever seen at fair or market place. One of them is lying in the Croppy-hole, this year, and another is in the wilds of New South Wales; and it is you I have to thank for that and for my misery."

The wounded man regarded each of his accusers, as they came forward and retired, with a smile of grim and calm defiance, nor did he appear in the slightest degree affected by the charges which they launched against him in his agony.

"I do not ask the Almighty to forgive him," screamed a withered creature on the right of Francis—"I had but the one—I had but the one alone—an' that villain came across him an' destroyed me! He left me childless—may the Lord

remember it to him in his own time! He left the widow's hearth-stone cold—may the Lord make a widow of his wife, and orphans of his own this night."

Again a grim smile of defiance crossed the pale face of the sufferer, and showed that even this imprecation had fallen harmless on his sleeping conscience.

"Shame! shame!" said Francis, "If any thing could move you to forgiveness, it ought to be the condition of the poor man who is suffering before you."

"Don't speak to me, sir," exclaimed the woman, "I know you well, mather Francis, I know you are our friend, but I know, likewise, what I had, an' how I lost it. I can't forgive him for my child's destruction!—I tell you it is an ease to me to see his blood, an' a joy to my heart to hear him groanin' with the anguish. An' see, if there isn't another come to ask for blood of her own at his hands. The mother of the Hares is come to see you in your trouble," she added, turning her face towards the bed.

At the same time, the crowd separated without, so as to allow the entrance of a stranger, who presented an appearance somewhat superior to the people by whom she was surrounded. She was dressed in deep mourning stuff, with a widow's cap on her head, and a cloth scapulary, of the order of the Blessed Virgin, around her neck. Although her countenance bore the traces of recent affliction, yet there was a habitual calmness in her eyes, and around her mouth, which gave an appearance of serenity and even sweetness to the figure.

She walked to the bed-side of the patient, and after pausing for a few moments in the attitude of one who endeavours to outweary rather than wrestle with a deep and agitating passion, she said to the bystanders in her native tongue:

"This man, who lies here, once professed the same faith and knelt at the same altar that we do ourselves. He deserted his creed, and to those who asked him wherefore he had done so, he replied, that he had discovered many errors in our doctrine, and that the worship which he offered up in his present creed was of a purer and loftier nature than he had ever used in ours. I appeal to you, my friends and neighbours, whether the course of his apparent life, since the day of his change, has been such as to justify the supposition of an improvement in his principles? Ah, say not that I judge



him, when I answer no ! The blood of our fair, our young, our virtuous, and our noble-hearted, give back the judgment, and not I. This morning, he made me feel for myself as I had often felt for others who had fallen into his power—he robbed me of my two children, and I tremble for their blood, for innocence is not a safe-guard in the grasp of Lacy. Yet let this deserter of our faith behold the influence of that doctrine which he has cast from him and reviled. Behold !” she continued, untying the strings of her widow’s cap and uncovering a head of hair half silvered over by the touch of age ; “ I make my head bare, in the presence of Him who is to judge us both, but do not tremble, murderer though you be, for I come to give you, not the mother’s and the widow’s curse, but the mother’s pardon in your dying hour. I forgive you for my lonely hearth, for the fearful days that I have passed, for the heart-aches and the pangs I feel this moment. Go to your Maker, if he call upon you, and tell him that Mary Hare has washed the blood of her children from your hands, and oh ! may he deal lightly with you, for the stains that many a broken heart beside has left there ! I know not how these guiltless men may thrive, the times have taught me to expect the worst, but let their fate be what it may, I say again, their mother pardons you, their mother gives you her forgiveness and her prayers.”

Without waiting any reply, the woman at these words glided out of the room, leaving the company impressed with a strange and solemn feeling, such as the novelty of such a scene was calculated to excite. It was difficult to observe whether it produced any effect upon the wounded man, for his countenance scarcely changed, and his position remained unaltered, but he did not receive it in the same spirit of calm and steady hate which he had evinced amid the execrations which preceded it.

“ I heard a voice, while ago,” said the sick man, “ that I would wish to hear again. If there be a gentleman in this room who will receive a dying man’s last wishes, I will thank him to draw near me.”

With some difficulty Francis succeeded in getting the apartment cleared, and after closing the door, and throwing in the bolt, he took a chair near the bed. The sick man turned on him a ghastly and wandering eye, and then sunk back, as if his suspicions had been fully justified :

"You seem to know me?" said Francis.

"I do," replied the other, faintly, "and I think it a sign of grace from Heaven that you have come to me at this moment, for that woman's *shanachus* was troubling my mind, and I longed to ease my soul of one offence at least before I die. I wouldn't have minded to the last the barking of those cabin curs that snarled where they dared not bite, but bloody as my hands have been, there's something of the gentleman about my heart, and the forbearance of that widowed wretch struck through it. I should not like to meet the Hares before a different court from that which I intended."

"You may make some reparation," said Francis, "by revealing all you know of them to me, and doing what you can to further the ends of justice before you go."

The patient smiled at this, as at a very simple speech.—"They call you bright," he said, "but I think you ought to know more of human nature than to think that any persuasions of your's could induce me to say more than this; he pointed with his finger to the wound—"I hope," he added after a pause, "I hope my cousins will take care that I have a decent funeral. My father's covered a mile o' the road. I am not so well liked in the country, but may be when I'm dead they'd forget that for me, in compliment to the family."

"Were you not rash," said Riordan, "to venture, unguarded, into the mountains?"

"Aye," said the other, quickly, "there's the point. I have been sacrificed. Lacy took home the Police as soon as I had lodged the Hares in jail, and would not lend a man on any account. He knew that they were bent on my destruction, for so my very murderer told me, and he was glad of it, for he was done with me, and he wished to be quit of the reward he promised me. And so he sent me, like Uriah to the battle, and so I fell. Ah, Owen, cousin Owen. I wonder if your death-bed will be like mine. Bid Owen pray for me, when you shall see him."

"And Lacy, then, betrayed you?"

"And seeks your life, too; look to it, I warn you. This doctor will never see me alive. The Hares are innocent. Have you a pencil here?"

"I have," said Francis taking out a pocket book.

"Then take my declaration while I am able to speak it."

He revealed the entire of an atrocious conspiracy formed upon the lives of the men in question, which Francis copied carefully, and treasured up against the examination on the following morning.

"If this be not my death-wound, as I fear it is," said the sick man, "I will make an effort to be upon the spot myself. But if it should be otherwise, remember what I have told you, look to yourself!—I heard you take my part against that vengeful hag, and even though you had not, I owe a deep revenge to Lady, and you are so far lucky, that I save your life to spite him. Ah, I am very weak. You saved the Hares once, do not neglect them now. I hope my cousins will not grudge a little expense upon my funeral, I could wish that Dick were there, but I suppose he is too great a man to think of it. If Bill could take it in hand, I'm sure it would be tasty, but where's the use o' talking?"

Doctor Jervas now arrived, to make an examination, and Francis departed, promising to call again in the morning, on his way to the sessions-house: and leaving Tobin to the mercy of the country people, some of whom exerted themselves to draw from him some intimation of the probable fate of the Hares; while others exhorted him to look into the state of his unhappy soul, and to make a last reparation for the scandal he had occasioned by returning to the bosom of the faith he had for-aken. Otherwise, the plainest hints were thrown out, with respect to his approaching destiny, and the most cogent arguments adduced in support of the doctrines of that ancient Church, which in the words of a rural bard;

For fifteen hundred years,  
As plainly doth appear,  
Continued quite free from molestation,  
Till woful heresy  
And infidelity  
Prevailed for to raise disconsolation.

But the medical attendant cut short the controversy, and turned all the polemics out of the room, leaving the renegade to his own reflections, and entrusting the task of his conversion to the less boisterous, but more persuasive, reasoner within his bosom.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE fate of the brothers had excited a strong interest throughout the district. Accordingly, at an early hour on the following morning, a considerable number of the country people had collected around the neighbouring court of petty sessions. Davy was there, and had the satisfaction, while they waited the arrival of the magistrates, of overwhelming Aaron Shepherd with a host of arguments partly original, partly deduced from the Profession of Faith made by Pope Pius the fourth, the Fifty Reasons of the Duke of Brunswick for embracing the Catholic faith, and various other sources.

Francis Riordan left his home, on this morning, with feelings of no common pain. Uncertain what the issue might be of his publicly appearing in defence of those suspected persons, with the recollection of his own imputed trespasses still hanging out against him, he paused a moment ere he left his home. He stole back again into Esther's chamber, stooped down and kissed her, sleeping, and then departed without farther hesitation.

"It may be," he said, "that this vindictive wretch may make his menace good against my life—but what of that? I was taught in childhood to place my country foremost among my affections, and I hope a few months' rest and quiet happiness have not unfitted me for practising the lesson."

Richard Lacy expected the arrival of this important morning with very different sensations. After returning on the previous evening, from one of his daily excursions, he was seen pacing up and down before the hall-door of his house, as if in anxious expectation of some messenger. The rain began to descend, and he was compelled, after having endured the shower for many minutes in increasing anxiety, to continue his vigil in the parlour.

He rang the bell many times, and inquired for different

members of his household, who were absent on business. At length, a horseman rode into the yard, and hurried up the stairs, like one acquainted with the impatient disposition of his master. Lacy, while his lips quivered with eagerness, made an effort to appear tranquil and indifferent while he asked the question :

" Well, Switzer, where is Tobin ?"

" Dead, sir," answered the policeman, closing his lips hard.

" Dead !" echoed Lacy, starting back with a look and action of feigned concern and ill concealed delight. " Is it certain, Switzer ?"

" I saw him down myself," replied the man, " I saw him in the hands of bitter enemies."

" Those murderous dogs !" said Lacy, " thus do we lose our most valuable friends, day after day, among them. We must be early at the Court to-morrow, and see those ruffians done for. Get down and eat. Poor Tobin ! I will speak with you, before I go to bed, again. At present, I am not easy in my mind, I have much to think of."

The man bowed, and left the room without speaking. Lacy remained pacing up and down rapidly for some moments, unwilling to acknowledge, even to his own mind, the murderous ecstasy he felt at being rid of so dangerous and insecure a counsellor as Tobin.

" Let him rest in peace !" he said at length aloud, " and let me think of him no more. I have the Hares to deal with. I hate them, for the shadow of that fiend has been upon them and hid them from the search of my revenge. Alive or dead, their fate will spite him sorely, and I have now the means to make it certain."

Having completed all his arrangements for the approaching morn, he flung himself upon his bed, and took such rest as usually haunts the pillows of the impassioned and the guilty.

The interior of the petty sessions house, at an early hour on the following morning, was occupied by nearly the same actors as those who appeared upon the scene in the first chapter of our tale. On a bench at one end of a deal table, sat Mr. Damer and his friend Mr. Leonard, nothing altered in appearance or condition by the lapse of the intervening months. The door was still closed, and a clerk sat at the

end of the table, busy in preparing his books and too far apart to hear the conversation which was passing between the two magistrates.

"Well," said Mr. Leonard, "now that I have asked after the condition of your other stock, your horses and your kine, will you tell me how you find your neophytes? Has the murrain of popery got among them once again?"

"I don't know how it is," replied his friend, with an embarrassed smile, "there is less gratitude, or less sincerity, among them than I believed."

"I know it well," returned Mr. Leonard, "the priest has coaxed them all back again, has he not?"

"And people so convinced, so thoroughly convinced, as they appeared to be!"

"Convinced of what?"

"Why, of the errors of their creed. They saw, as plainly as I could desire, the excessive folly of many of their ecclesiastical ceremonies, and the profaneness of their subordinate articles of faith."

"Ay, but you know that was in spring, and it is autumn now."

"Well, why should a man's eyes be more open before summer than after?"

"Because potatoes were thirty shillings a barrel in spring, whereas now they may be had for five."

Some other magistrates dropping in at this moment, cut short the dialogue, and the conversation became more general.

"Well, Dickson," said Mr. Leonard, "so you won't allow me to make that little road to the village?"

"I cannot consent to it, sir," returned the gentleman so addressed, with a grave look; "I think the road is not wanted, and besides, Mr. Leonard, I thought you knew my principles. I am a tory, sir."

"Well, Mr. Evans, *you're* a whig. May I count on *your* voice?"

"Oh, certainly, Leonard, you may. But then I must have yours in another matter of the kind that I shall speak to you about another time."

"You may count upon it, Evans; provided you fling no job upon my hands."

"Job! oh, fie! fie!"

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The crowd were now admitted, and several cases were despatched, while they awaited the arrival of Lacy, as the accuser of the Hares. Some processes were issued, to recover for a smith the price of a new spade ; for a weaver, the worth of a piece of bandle linen ; or for a village carpenter, the cost of some repairs in instruments of husbandry. Then came the dire account of trespasses and offences. A policeman, with a long paper in his hand, containing a list of parochial grievances, appeared at the right hand side of the clerk, prepared with law and evidence

—'t impeach a broken hedge,  
And pigs unring'd at *vis franc.* pledge;  
Tell who did play at games unlawful,  
And who filled pots of ale but half full.

Complaints were made of, and fines inflicted on, the bare-footed proprietors of goats and pigs found trespassing upon the highway, notwithstanding all that human eloquence and ingenuity could do on their behalf. Penalties were imposed on publicans, for vending whiskey at illegal times, and sundry other nibblers of justice were reproved for their audacity.

But in the midst of those affairs of less interest, a general murmur of dislike, and hatred ill subdued, announced the arrival of some unpopular individual. The people in the sessions-house judged that it was Lacy, and so it was. The village Sejanus entered pale, and cadaverous with anxiety, while his round, full, sparkling eyes, glanced rapidly in all directions, to ascertain what difficulties he might have to encounter in the approaching effort. They alighted with some appearance of dissatisfaction upon the form of Mr. Leonard; but yet the concern of Lacy at his presence was not considerable, for his talent was not sufficient to render him a very formidable opponent.

The Hares, two decent looking countrymen, with a remarkable family likeness of each other, were then summoned to the end of the table, and Lacy stood up to make his charge against them, and to produce his informations. The accusation which he made was briefly as follows :

These two brothers were, he said, his own tenants. They had been long applying to him for an abatement in their

rent, which he had constantly refused. At length, he received an intimation, from a person in his employment, named Tobin, that these two men, in company with several others, meditated an attack upon his house, with a view of compelling him to enter into the terms which they desired. Their rendezvous was at a ruined castle within a few hundred paces of his residence, and he was also made aware of the night on which the project was to be put in execution. Accordingly he took care to be upon his guard, and lay hid within the ruin until the party should appear. The two prisoners now before the magistrates were the two who first appeared, and they were instantly secured, and without much eclat. Some unknown circumstances, however, had occasioned the remainder of the party to take alarm, and they did not appear at the place of appointment. Tobin was now dead, fallen a victim, doubtless, to his zeal upon this very occasion, but Lacy had still enough of evidence to make his allegations good. He had the policemen who assisted in their apprehension, and he had a threatening notice in the handwriting of the elder Hare, which was nailed upon his gate, and the purport of which was, that he must either make up his mind to comply with the reasonable demands of his tenants, or else prepare his coffin.

These facts were proved by the policemen, and others, and the threatening notice was handed in, and examined by the magistrates. The identity of the handwriting was proved by several witnesses.

When the Hares were called upon for their defence, a very fat and short-armed little man arose. His dress was rather threadbare; his eye affectedly subtle; and his mouth had got a habitual twist to one side, from the custom of speaking, apart, inside his palm, to counsel and others, in presence of the court. He affected some smart attitudes, in mimicry of lawyers at the bar, darted his eyes knowingly on both sides, and whispered a moment with the elder Hare. He then stood up, nodded significantly two or three times, and prepared to address the magistrates.

"I ask pardon," said Lacy, rising, with a smile, "but I think this gentleman is an attorney?"

"Yes, I am *concerned*\* for the prisoners," replied the egal minnow.

\* Employed on their behalf.



"Then," rejoined Lacy, "it behooves the magistrates to stay a proceeding so much out of course. It is already decided, by many precedents, that a prisoner cannot be heard by attorney on his examination before a magistrate."

The attorney replied, quoted, looked angry, railed and bullied, but Lacy overwhelmed him with precedents, and he was compelled to retire, uttering a storm of censures and menaces.

"Oh, murther," said the younger Hare, "arn't we to have the law, either? Well, Mr. O'Twist, you wont keep our three and ninepence,\* Sir, as you can't be any use to us?"

He was answered by a storm of abuse; the fat lawyer protesting that he had sacrificed three other clients to his anxiety on behalf of this pair of ingrates. And saying this, and brushing his bat furiously round with the cuff of his coat, he clapped it down upon his head, and left the court, looking like a man who had been very ill used.

The elder Hare was then called on by Mr. Leonard, to deliver, in his own manner, an account of the transaction. The man, who was an intelligent looking person, approached the table with some anxiety of manner, and yet with an apparent consciousness of right, which excited a considerable degree of interest in his favour.

"Please your worship," he said. "Mr. Lacy, I know, is a well-spoken gentleman, and 'tis little use it will be for me, now that my attorney is gone, to take it in hand to gainsay what he advanced; but still I'll thry my endayvours. It was I wrote that notice, surely, an' it was I, an no one else, that nailed it on the gate; an' I'll tell you why I done so. This Tobin, that they say is dead now, come to me one day and asked me if I'd like to have my rent of my little farm abated?—I told him I would, why not? for it was that I was asking Mr. Lacy for, ever an' always. Because, says Tobin, Mr. Lacy wants to get an abatement himself from the head landlord, an' all he requires is just an excuse for lowering the rent to you. So, says he, it would be a good plan if you an' your brother (manin' this boy here a near me,) an' one or two more, would get together some night an' post a threatening' notice upon the gate, an', afther that,

\* The customary fee of those attorneys who practise at Courts.

to come some night an' make an attack, by way of a feint, upon the house, an' give him an excuse for saying his life was in danger on account o' the rent. We did his biddin', an' we fell into the snare they laid. Tobin set the crib to catch us, and now Mr. Lacy comes to put the *goulogue*\* upon our necks."

A murmur of suppressed indignation passed among the listeners, as the man concluded, but Lacy regarded him with a smile of calm reproof and pity.

"It is very well," said he, "the case is stated with very great precision. It only remains to be seen in evidence that all this is not a fabrication."

"Have you the necessary proofs of this, Hare?" asked Mr. Leonard.

"Sure here's my brother that was by, the whole time while Tobin was talking to me."

"I'll take the vestment of it," said the brother.

"My good fellow," said Damer, while they were smiling at the man's simplicity, "your brother lies implicated in the same accusation that lies against yourself, and his testimony can avail you nothing. Have you no other evidence?"

"Have you no person to produce who was present at those conversations with Tobin, besides your brother?"

"There was nobody by, exceptin' myself an' Thade," replied the prisoner.

"You have no witness then?" asked Leonard, in a tone of commiseration.

"No witness," said the man, falling into a desponding attitude.

"No witness," cried Lacy, starting up with the rapid action of one who is hurried on by sudden passion. "No witness! and behold him standing there with the black libel yet upon his lips, baffled in the vilest calumny that hate and disappointment ever hatched. He has no witness! not even among his gang of perjured accomplices can he find one so impudent as to support him in that shameless falsehood. This is the fate of loyal gentlemen in times like these. I have wrenched the dagger from the assassin's hand, and he strives to stab me with his tongue. He has no witness——"

"Yes," cried a voice from the crowd, "he has one."

\* A forked stick, used to secure birds taken in a crib in winter.

Lacy paused, his hand still clenched, outstretched, and his forehead gathered into the frown of denunciation, while an individual made his way through the throng, and came forward to the table. The stranger was wrapped in a travelling cloak, and his hat, whether by accident or affectation, was brought low upon his brow.

"I can give evidence," he said, in a low voice, "in favour of the prisoners."

"And your name, sir?" asked Mr. Leonard.

The stranger paused a moment, lowered his face, pressed his hand upon his brow, and seemed to be debating with himself a point of vital consequence. At length he raised his person, and said in the same subdued voice:

"My name is Riordan, Francis Riordan."

"It is! I knew it!" cried Lacy, now for the first time springing from that attitude in which he had been interrupted into one of more ecstatic energy.—"I knew the rebel under his disguise. 'Tis his accomplice and his old protector! Up gentlemen, if you are loyal men, and see that traitor handcuffed."

"Hold!" cried Riordan, gently raising one hand, and putting back with the other the hat which had in part concealed his features. "It is true; my name is Riordan, as I said, and I am this man's friend. I have proved it well this morning. But there is no occasion for the violence which Mr. Lacy recommends. I am come here to deliver myself into the hands of these gentlemen, who will no doubt see justice fully done without that stormy zeal which he deems necessary."

"It shall be done!" said Lacy, fiercely.

"It shall!" echoed Francis, "to your perfect satisfaction. Aye, Lacy, you shall have it brimming full.—You have laid treason at my door, and I will point it out lurking behind your own. You have called me rebel, falsely called me so, but I will make the same charge good against yourself, by evidence as palpable as matter. A double rebel, false to your king, and darkly, covertly false to the hand that makes you what you are. That man's defence is true and literal," he added, handing over a paper to the magistrates. "I have it from the lips of Lacy's own accomplice, the betrayed, the deserted Tobin. There is his declaration."

It was read aloud, and Lacy employed the respite thus afforded him in spinning a new clue to free himself from the labyrinth in which he became so unexpectedly entangled.

"The calumny," he said, "is strongly built, and shows fairly on the face, but there is still a flaw in the foundation. What proof is there that this is Tobin's writing?"

"My oath—A hundred oaths."

"Ay, oaths enough! They are now as plentiful as western winds. The word of Heaven is now sent far and wide, throughout this kingdom, but it is only used to multiply the opportunities of perjury. For this, good men have met, and holy men have prayed, for this the wealth of Britain melts down before the feet of her apostles; that they may be reviled and mocked, and that falsehood and treason may need no means to give assurance to their calumnies. Such are the oaths that you can tender us, and such are the oaths against which the whole course of a life of undeviating loyalty gives feeble and unavailing testimony."

"One oath at least, I have," replied the witness, calmly, "which even you cannot impeach."

"Even there, even with that precious gem of perjury to decorate your falsehood, you still are foiled and baffled. This is not Tobin's dying declaration."

"How?"

"The law declares that documental testimony is only admissible when the witness has supplied it under the firm belief that life was on the wing. What proof have we of this?"

"Is the law so merciful?" said Francis, turning to the magistrates with an appealing look, and a smile of mingled satisfaction and surprise.

"Consult the statutes, consult Philips, consult Macnally, gentlemen," cried Lacy, with a triumph flashing in the eyes.

"The document is worthless," murmured Riordan, "I have no proof; I do not know myself that Tobin had resigned all hope of life."

"And this, then," exclaimed Lacy, with a satisfaction ill concealed by the show of indignation he thought it useful to assume—"this is the sum of all that mass of evidence, which was meant to overwhelm my character, and sink the brand of treason into my door!"

"Not all," said Riordan, "I have yet one witness left. Tobin," he cried, "come forward!"

The crowd was again in motion, and Lacy shrunk back as if a lightning-flash had crossed him. Supported by a countryman, pale-faced and feeble, with a kerchief bound about his battered head, Tobin came forward trembling to the table. Had he been visibly summoned from the grave, with all its funeral suits and trappings wrapt around him, he could not have appalled the heart of Lacy with a shock of deeper terror and despair. He remained set in the attitude of sudden fear, and stared hard, as if in presence of a supernatural appearance.

"Yes!" exclaimed Riordan, pointing to the wounded man, and gazing fixedly on his persecutor; "there is the witness whose testimony I said even you could not impeach, for his was the evidence which you have most employed against the lives and fortunes of your fellow-countrymen. His oath will make that declaration good, and the cloak shall be torn from your raw designs, and you shall be unmasked to the world for the subtle rebel, and the double traitor that you are."

"For one who boasts of right upon his side," muttered Lacy, with a ghastly sneer, "you are vehement enough."

"I am! I love to lay the blow home on such a back as yours," said Riordan, warmly. "Were you only foolish, I could be content to laugh at you; were you only malicious, I might be satisfied to despise you; were you only ignorant of good, it might content me to avoid you; but when I see that ignorance, that folly, and that malice united in one dark and subtle heart, its owner becomes a subject for the lash, and that lash I will never spare to such as you, while I have a hand to lay it on."

"You say well," said Lacy, seizing the advantage which Riordan's vehemence afforded him, "and I might fear you too, if rant could strengthen falsehood."

"Liar, and hangman as you are!" cried the young soldier, wholly abandoning his self-command, "leave law to those who love it. Come out, and give me the satisfaction of a gentleman with the weapon of a soldier. Come out, and meet me on the level field, if old defeats have not made a coward of you! I say, come out, and make that saying good upon me, if ye dare!"

The grim and eager smile with which his enemy regarded him, showed with what a horrid rapture he would have answered the summons, if deeper interests had not prevented him. The energy of voice, and look, and action, on both sides, was so terrific, that it was some time before even the magistrates, armed with all the influence of authority, would venture to interfere between the hostile spirits. But they did at length interpose, and were obeyed.

"Another time," said Lacy.

"Another time, then," echoed Riordan. "Meanwhile, the witness waits."

"Pardon me," said Lacy, addressing himself to the magistrates, "I have a word or two to offer. It was told me last night that Tobin was murdered in the hills, and I was so convinced of his death, that I have seldom felt a more singular astonishment than his sudden reappearance at that table excited. I regretted his loss extremely, for he was a useful friend, and I owed him much which I longed to repay; I grieved that I had not sooner acquitted myself of obligations which he had long before laid on me. [These words were accompanied by a covert glance at the witness, which was withdrawn the instant the speaker saw that it was understood.] I have now to solicit that these prisoners be remanded, and that the examination be deferred for one night; a request which I think cannot appear extraordinary, considering the new turn that affairs have taken."

To this request, apparently so reasonable, Francis could offer no objection, without incurring the reproach of virulence, and it was acceded to without farther question. The prisoners were remanded; and Lacy was then asked what he had to adduce against Riordan that might touch his personal liberty? So downcast was he by the resurrection of his victim, and perplexed by his own embarrassed situation, that he could offer no accusation whatever.

"At present," said he, "I have not my evidence prepared. I will say more hereafter."

"Then you have no objection," said Leonard, "to his being abroad to-night upon his own recognizances?"

"None," muttered Lacy, in a sullen tone. And his only relief was in the look of disappointed hate and malice which he sent after his successful enemy, as he left the sessions house.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE next morning, when Francis arrived at the sessions house, he found that the affair had taken a still stranger turn than before. Lacy did not appear : he was confined to his house by illness, and Tobin seemed to have undergone the influence of some magician in the night. He had lost all recollection of the document which he had furnished to Francis Riordan, and he was unable to supply any evidence whatever respecting the conspiracy which was yesterday alleged with so much perseverance. No reason could be discovered for this change of sentiment, and no remedy was to be found.

Neither was there any effort made to renew the ancient charge against young Riordan. He remained at liberty, and received one or two significant hints from Mr. Leonard that there was little fear of any attempt being made to place it under any restriction.

The conduct of the prisoners, his protégés, likewise seemed extraordinary in the eyes of Francis. They seemed perfectly contented with their situation and not in the least dismayed when fully committed for trial. One of them, who saw him look uneasy and surprised, told him that he need not feel the least alarm upon their account, though he could not at that moment let him know the cause of the security he felt. The mystery was cleared, however, at the following assizes, where both the brothers were discharged for want of a prosecutor.

The reader may, without any effort at detail on the part of the historian, imagine all the consternation and delight with which Esther was once more received among her friends. It consoled her uncle for the failure of his cherished schemes of religious amelioration in the cabins, and old Aaron for the defeat which he had sustained at the hands of Davy Lenigan.

From that time forward, the habits, the character, and the health of Lacy, seemed to have undergone a singular alteration. His enmity, his love, and his ambition, appeared to have been altogether blasted. He appeared but little in public, and the virulence of his animosity against his humble

neighbours was observed to soften and abate by slow degrees. In a few months his name was seldom heard in courts of justice, was seldom seen at the head of committals in the public prints, and at length sounded in the ears of those who heard it, like that of one departed from the world. There was a mixture of kindness and pity in the tone with which his name was mentioned among cottage circles, which, more than all besides, demonstrated the alteration which had taken place in Lacy's character.

It was with a feeling of sincere concern and pity, likewise, that Esther learned, in some months after, that her disappointed admirer was dangerously ill, and supposed, indeed, to have already reached a hopeless stage in his disease. She was seated at table, when the account arrived, and it affected her deeply and visibly ; for she well knew that, whatever Lacy had been to others, he had always loved her with a deeper and a truer passion than men so evil-minded generally feel.

From day to day the accounts became more alarming, and, at length, a messenger, sent specially by Francis, for the purpose of inquiring into the condition of the sufferer, returned with astonishment upon his countenance to say that Mr. Lacy, though unable to leave his room for two days before, had suddenly disappeared from among his attendants, and fled, no one knew whither.

Disturbed by this intelligence, Esther arose and walked out into the air, while Francis mounted his horse, and rode across the mountains to offer whatever assistance lay within his power.

The evening was calm, and Esther sat to enjoy it in a rustic seat, placed in a corner of the solitary mountain recess in which Lough B—— was situated. Before her lay the lake, a still and dark expanse, crossed by a few broad gleams of light from the western extremity. On the opposite side, a solemn precipice sunk suddenly upon the level water, its sides rugged with granite, intertangled with stunted shrubs, its forehead bald and frowning, and its foot slippered in a moss of the tenderest green, which the vassal waters kissed in silent veneration. On the right hand, a small cascade just served to deepen the sense of solitude on the mind of the beholder. On the left, the shore scarce rose above the surface of the lake, and the summits of some distant hills, which appeared above the undulating heath, suggested the idea of



an interminable extension of the vale which here commenced. Around the shores of the craggy side, the shrubs were silvered with a dripping moisture, occasioned by the oozing from another lake, which lay at a loftier elevation on the other side of the mountain.

In a boat, on the lake, was a servant of the house, who was employed in angling for some gray trout. Esther watched him pulling gently to the land, drawing in his skiff, and carrying his net well loaded to the house, without stirring from her attitude of contemplation.

In this situation, she was surprised by the appearance of several peasant children, who were advancing by the winding road that led out of the valley. They were all attired in white, and one, a peachy cheeked boy of five or six years of age, held in his arms a kind of effigy, dressed up in female habiliments, and having the breast bone of a goose as a succedaneum for the human countenance. When they came in sight of the lady, they suddenly halted, and a whispering consultation ensued, which from the stooping position of many of the figures, seemed to consist of certain words of encouragement and counsel, addressed to the bearer of the effigy. Advancing then within a few paces of the seat on which Esther lay expecting them, they separated, and fell back on either side, suffering the little fellow to advance alone, and speak for them to the lady. Esther watched his demeanour in this awful crisis with a natural interest. Looking up in her face, with a bold smile, and a blush, which was the only mark of conscious hardihood in his appearance, he said with great distinctness :

"Good morrow, ma'am."

"Good morrow, sir," replied Esther, smiling, but relaxing nothing of her stateliness, nor in any way assisting him.

"Somethin', ma'am, for Miss Biddy, if you please."

"And who is Miss Biddy, sir?"

This was not in the little fellow's lesson, and he looked sidelong over his shoulder for assistance from the prompter. A girl somewhat older, and with a sisterly resemblance in the face, advanced a step or two, and said, with a downcast eye and a timid accent :

"Saint Bridget, ma'am, if you please."

"And who is Saint Bridget, love?"

This again was a question too deeply theological for any head in the little assembly, and they all looked at one ano-

ther with puzzled and inquiring eyes. But as Esther, although a conscientious protestant, was not in the language of the cottagers, a "convarther," she did not think it necessary to press it any farther. Recollecting that the following day was the anniversary of the saint above named, and remembering also the village customs which used to afford her so much delight in her infancy, she placed a liberal donation in the hands of "Miss Biddy's" youthful advocate, and had the pleasure of seeing the whole party hurry off, whispering together and conversing in suppressed exultation.

"I hardly know what my uncle might say," she murmured to herself, "if he knew that I encouraged so profane a ceremony. But whatever claims the great virgin of Kildare might lay upon me in a religious point of view, I cannot avoid feeling some interest in the name, when I recollect that it has suggested one of the Irish melodies."

Scarcely had she uttered these words, when a low hoarse voice, at her ear, said, in a tone of deep anxiety and earnestness :

"Be not alarmed, Esther ! Let me entreat you, Esther, not to feel any alarm."

She sprung to her feet at the sound of this startling voice, and, looking back with great rapidity, beheld a figure that sent a shivering through every nerve within her frame. Richard Lacy was standing underneath a fading laburnum ; his attire of a meaner appearance than had ever been usual with him ; his face (to use a powerful and untranslatable French expression) utterly *decharné* ; his eyes sending out a wild and sickly fire, and his whole figure wearing the plain and visible marks of diminished fortunes, of ruined hopes, and faded energies of mind and person.

"I, too," he said, perceiving the irrepressible emotion and surprise with which Esther gazed upon him, "I, too, you see, can play the spectre when I please." And he pointed with a horrid smile to his ghastly countenance, and then to his attenuated frame.

"Mr. Lacy !" Esther said, in a low voice, and panting with agitation.

"And yet," he continued with the same ghastly calmness in his utterance, "it is but the rehearsal of a part that I must soon be called to enact in gloomy truth. They are calling for me fast, but I am come here first to finish my

last scene before your eyes, for I have loved your praise, once, far too well. I could not die, Esther, without bidding you farewell, not that I fear it yet for many a day, but it is possible."

"Oh, do not say it."

"Wherefore should I not?" he exclaimed, with sudden passion—"Why do you bid me not? I could tell you who has brought me to that point. I know, and you know, who it is that made this world look worthless in my eyes, and crossed my life with torture, disappointment, woe, and want; and yet you bid me to remain among the miseries which that one has spread about me, you bid me hug the rack to which that one has bound me! I could tell you who it is, but I will not;—for I love you—deeply, to the death, I love you.—Ah, shrink not from the declaration of a dying man."

"Dying!"

"Ay, dying, though it be by morsels. Dying a fearful and despairing death; dying all full of blood; all hopeless; all dismayed; ay, for the first time, all dismayed with my forebodings!"

"Oh, do not—do not speak so shockingly——"

"What should I do?"

"Repent——!"

"Of what? Count me up, first, the sum of that which I have laid upon my soul; and number then, the years which this worn frame is fitted to outlive, and see if I have time to wash the mass away. The fiends have got the better of my courage. I could not bear the horrors of my bed at night. Such shapes—such shrieks—such menaces—such dreams of horror and of anguish. They told me that I had no chance of life, and yet they wished to tie me down to all the horrors of solitude and recollection. But I could not bear the fever in my mind, and I hurried from that troubled host of thoughts, to look for peace and pity and refreshment in your presence."

"Oh, would I could afford it!" exclaimed Esther, with great earnestness and warmth.

"But you cannot," cried Lacy, bitterly. "They tell me at my house that I am changed; they think, because my looks and actions are no longer what they were, that I am altered too in mind and in affection. Because they see not the fever of ambition burning in my eye, they think I am content; because they mark not the working of hate upon

my brow and lip, they think I am appeased ; because they see not the turmoil of love in all my conduct and my speech, they think I am resigned. But they deceive themselves. The evil spirits have not left my bosom, but they have done their work, and they are slumbering within their house. I am still disgusted with the thing I am, although I make no effort to become what I would be. I still detest—abhor my enemy, although it be with an inactive hatred ; I love you still, though with a hopeless passion.”

“ Believe me, believe me,” said Esther, “ I feel for you.”

“ And is that much ?” the half delirious man exclaimed, standing erect, and knitting his brows upon her, “ is that so wonderful ? For you, Esther, I would have been the glorious thing that I have failed to become ; and for you have I become the miserable thing I am ! Great Justice !” he exclaimed, throwing up his arms and remaining in an attitude of despairing wonder, “ is this the end of all my early projects, of all my hope, of all my love ? The innocent have died—the sinless wept—my hands have become clammy with gore. I am loaded with the curses of bereaved thousands, the world labours to heave me from its breast, and the dreaded deep roars for me like a hungry monster—and this is all my ease, that Esther feels for me !”

“ Oh, Richard ! Richard !”

Not before, in this interview, had Esther ventured to address him thus familiarly by his Christian name. The suggestion of intimacy which it conveyed struck through his bosom with a softening influence ; he clasped his hands, bent gradually forward, and every limb appeared to feel the quickening agitation. Esther, feeling her power, resolved to use it for his benefit.

“ Richard,” she said, “ if you have loved me, as you say, grant me this one request—”

Perceiving that he did not move, she laid her hand upon his arm, and repeated, in a softened voice, “ Richard !”

He looked on her with an expression of the most intense pleasure, and said, “ What would you, Esther ? What must I do for you ?”

“ Return to your home,” said Esther, bursting into tears, and extending her hands towards him in deep pity—“ Repress those horrid fancies ; live, and be Esther’s friend ! Oh, do not yield that strong and gifted mind to false and de-

structive imaginations. Whatever may have been your faults, you have much to hope, for you have been strongly, terribly tempted. A single one of those many passions, which have consumed your youth, might have sufficed for the endangering of many a soul. Despair not then, for your own sake—for mine. Return to your home, employ yourself in offices of penitence and kindness, deserve the pardon and blessing which I know, I feel, that there is no man but will bestow.

Esther, who had listened to her with motionless attention, now burst forth, she had made an end, to feel that she had no more to say, and, to enjoy the happiness he had bestowed upon her, she threw her arms round his neck, and remained thus for some time, her eyes closed, and fixed in mournful contemplation.

"I will," she said at last, "that one support, at least, is left me. Whether I succeed or fail, at least remember me to your mother at the instant. Whatever be the colour of the banner that may remain after me, remember that to me, at least, I was not guilty of any error; whether I die atoned or forgiven, forget not that to you, at least, I lived sincere, unchanging, and devoted."

He took her hand in his, shook it twice with great force, regarding her at the same time with the air of despairing resolution which one feels at resigning for ever a sole and ruling hope. He then walked up the pathway, continuing to turn upon her the same heart-shattered gaze, until he was hid by the interposing shrubs. When she could no longer behold him, Esther sunk down upon the seat which she had left, and relieved herself by crying bitterly.

He kept his word with Esther, in adopting the course of life which she recommended; but the shock which his health had undergone was too severe, and he died before the year was ended. This event was regarded by some with pity, and by the greater number with indifference. Whether the change in his conduct were effected by the influence of true repentance, or merely a new direction given to the ruling passion; whether it was found available or otherwise, are questions not to be solved on earth: but, as we know that the just Author of human nature always proportions his mysterious aids to the violence of those passions which he has implanted in the heart, it may be hoped that Lacy's exertions were not made in vain.

# TRACY'S AMBITION.

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## CHAPTER I.

Few persons in this world, I believe, ever led a life of more equable prosperity than mine, until my years approached that period when the fortunes of most men cease to be stormy, and the passion for adventure has died away, or given place to a longing for domestic peace and comfort. I was one of a race who may be considered the only tenants of land in my native island. Our castle owners, above us, and our cabin holders, below, are both men of estate; while we occupy the generous position of honorary agents to the former, serving to collect their rents in a troublesome country; and of scape goats on whom the latter are enabled to repose the burthen of rent, tythes, and county charges.

I was, for any thing I could ever learn to the contrary, a happy man. My wife, Mary, though superior to me in birth and education, was gentle and affectionate, and my daughter Ellen was not only a beauty, but an excellent house-keeper. But let me here inform you how I was fortunate enough to conclude a matrimonial engagement, in which the advantage in rank and almost every other circumstance, was on my side.

It was, Ladies, an elopement. I was standing, on a sultry day in Autumn, among a crowd of persons, who were witnessing the races of a well known city in our neighbourhood. The course occupied a space of some miles around a gentle acclivity, on the summit of which was a stunted obelisk of modern architecture, which on this occasion displayed a flag of gay device. The whole side of another hill, which arose on the farther side of the course, between me and the city, seemed to be one fluctuating mass of life. It was covered with a black multitude, over which the bright

sunshine shed its heavy autumnal splendour, glittering occasionally with a more gay and marked effect on the white kerchiefs and scarlet mantles which enlivened the darker groundwork of the scene. It resembled a moving lake of black hats and brisk caps and bonnets, intermingling its contents in a hundred eddies, and receiving tributary streams from the many pathways which led over the fields and hedges from the city. The tents, as tattered as the robe of Julius Cæsar, the casks of liquor, the shining drinking vessels set forth at the entrance of each ; the grotesque signs, the stand-house, the band, the equipages filled with flaunting silks and muslins, and the mass of equestrian spectators who made the field shake under them from time to time, contributed to render the scene not a little exhilarating.

I leaned against a stunted tree, after the *heats* were ended, listening to the conversation of some country people, who were seated on the short sun-burnt grass, eating gingerbread and slyly passing round under cover of the women's blue cloaks, a bulky substance, which, from the use made of it, I judged to be a quart bottle. The people were descending from the various eminences which they had occupied for the advantage of seeing the course, and the tents became too narrow and scanty for the numbers who were anxious to obtain refreshment within. The carriages and horsemen, surrounded by clouds of dust, were rapidly whirling off in the direction of the city, and, in a little time, most of the respectable spectators had taken the way homeward.

Suddenly, a low, harsh sound, resembling that occasioned by the inundation of a great mass of waters, arose from the multitude, and made me turn my eyes quickly towards the hill before mentioned. I saw the crowd thickening in the centre, while the groups, which before were scattered at a distance over the landscape, now hurried rapidly towards the main throng. The dull indistinct sound, which I at first heard, soon broke out into shrieks and yells, and I beheld female figures flying in terror towards the highway leading to the city. The condensed multitude seemed to be borne backward and forward in an agitated and tumultuous manner, while sticks were brandished and stones thickened in the air. At the same time, as if the discord on earth had communicated itself to the heavens, the face of the sky was overspread, and a deluge of rain was poured upon the

combatants, which continued without intermission throughout the evening.

While I hastened to the shelter of a close thorn, (the only one that was left unoccupied near me,) my attention was caught by a lady and gentleman on horseback, who were galloping away from the scene of action, and followed by a servant in plain livery. On a sudden, I perceived the lady stretching away from her companion, who presently pulled up his horse, as if fearful of alarming the flying animal by the appearance of pursuit. I saw the latter take a path which passed close by the spot on which I stood. In a little time I perceived, by the expanded nostrils, staring eyes, and levelled ears of the animal, that, although the fair rider kept her seat with great firmness, still the excursion was not undertaken at her own suggestion. The extreme rapidity of its motion, however, seemed to produce that effect on her mind, which fear, alone, could not accomplish. A short, faint scream, which pierced my very heart with pity, broke from the poor young lady; her head, which until then had been bent forward in an attitude of steady resolution, now hung helplessly back, her small round hat was carried away, and a mass of bright tresses streamed upon the wind. Onward still the animal pressed, making the condition of the rider still more perilous. Her frame grew momentarily more feeble, and swung from side to side, while the reins slackened in her grasp, and she seemed, at every fresh bound of the steed, in the imminent danger of reeling from the saddle.

The manner in which I was enabled to arrest the progress of the steed, to restore the dear equestrian to her feet, and in fine, to leave her in perfect security, it is not needful to detail. Let it be sufficient to relate, that this adventure led to an acquaintance with the lovely fugitive, and this acquaintance ended in the elopement above alluded to. Fearful that we could not obtain the consent of her brother, who was her only living relative, and on whom she was entirely dependent, we formed the unwise resolution of first placing it beyond his power to oppose our wishes, if they happened to jar against his own. This was, indeed, a thoughtless act of mine, considering that they were orphans, had lived together from their childhood, and ever, until then, had kept a single counsel. It was doubly criminal and inconsiderate,



as her brother had been very kind to her, and though his fortune was not brilliant, afforded her even more of elegant accomplishment than was usual in her rank.

We had found an accommodating clergyman, and the ceremony was nearly concluded, when the young gentleman, whose pursuit we were prepared to expect (though we scarcely imagined it could be so rapid), was added to our wedding party. To our great astonishment there were no marks of displeasure on his countenance, and he remained, with much equanimity of manner to witness the completion of the ceremony. I saw that he avoided looking towards his sister, who seemed on the point of sinking to the earth, and that his lip trembled for a moment when he heard her speak the last necessary words of assent. The instant the clergyman had ceased to speak, and while the few who were in the room awaited, with embarrassed silence, the first movement of one so deeply interested, he walked up to the bride, took her hand, kissed her, and looking in her face for a few seconds, with a smile, in which the bitterness of reproach was tempered by the deepest pity and affection, he said :—

“ Since it is beyond recall, I will be one of those to congratulate you. You have found a way, at length, to rid yourself of a disagreeable restraint. Why did you not tell me of this, Mary? What have I ever done to make you distrust my affection for you? If you think I could have been selfish enough to prefer my own satisfaction to your happiness, you mistake my character altogether, and you ought to have known it, Mary, before now. I hoped you would, at least, have allowed me to act the part of a brother to you when this occasion should arrive. But you have rejected me your confidence, and I will never seek to acquire it again. Good by!” Here he pressed her hand, closed his lips hard, and looked long into her eyes. “ I am sorry you should have thought this necessary.”

He then shook her hand again, and letting it fall, as suddenly as if his touch had paralyzed its energies, turned round, and left the house with a step and look of forced ease and indifference.

To me he said not a word, nor cast a single glance either of indignation or forgiveness. I expected rage and reproaches, and for those I was prepared, but this perfect and

unimpassioned contempt (if indeed so positive a feeling at all entered into his thoughts), this total forgetfulness of my very presence, had something in it so annoying, that the recollection of that moment, whenever it occurred at any subsequent period of my life, made the blood tingle in my very ears and fingers.

In a short time after, Ulick Regan (the brother) left the country, without making any one acquainted with the place of his destination. Previous to his departure, he invested the sum which he originally intended for her dowry in the hands of a common friend ; with whom it still remained, for the benefit of her eldest daughter.

The calm generosity and forbearance with which he had treated her, made an impression on the young mind of Mary Tracy which never after was removed. Even during the first months of our married life, although every day convinced me more and more of the depth and sincerity of her affection, I had frequently the mortification to detect the traces of weeping in her eyes, and to observe, by her repeated and involuntary fits of abstraction, that her thoughts were still occupied with the remembrance of her ingratitude. I believe the first time I heard her volunteer the mention of his name, after our marriage, was on the birth of our second child, when, after gazing on it with great fondness for some moments, she asked me, in a low voice, " If it was not like Ulick in the eyes ?" To which I replied, as if struck on a sudden with the force of the remark, that it was an exact fac-simile ; although, to say a truth, excepting the general resemblance which the great human family bear one to another, there was not much to be said on the similitude.

With the exception of this little melancholy on Mary's part, we passed our time with sufficient comfort at Cushlanebeg, the name of my little residence. I kept a couple of stout riding horses, an outside jaunting car, to give the ladies an airing on Sundays, and a small turf boat, which was moored in a creek of the neighbouring river, and by means of which I maintained a little export trade with the capital of the county in corn, pork, freeholders, and other commodities which I raised on my farm.

I endeavoured, with all the good-will in my power, to sustain the character for hospitality which had been transmitted to me by my father. . I did so, nevertheless, with a

laudable share of prudence. It was my principle never to give entertainments, and seldom to be wholly without society. I seldom gave "parties," for I thought it no part of the virtue of hospitality to summon a number of quiet families from their comfortable fire-sides to my own, to keep them tossing their heels into the air to the sound of a small current of wind forced through a number of curiously varied apertures, or plying them with a frightful excess of stimulant at an hour when nature yearned for the sedatives of slumber and quiescence, leaving them, moreover, to answer for many a *nien-she-sthig*\* that was given, in the interim, to the weary wayfarer who might call at their houses. Let every man make his house merry, while he holds it, was my sentiment. A cheerful gentleman, whose chimneys may be discerned from the king's highway, will never be in want of society, though he should never stir abroad to look for it. This is a fact which I have learned from experience.

Such was my course of life up to the period when that horrid passion, the ravages of which so swiftly overthrew my peace, and tore up all my earthly hopes, first shed its darkening soil upon a heart that, until then, was light and comparatively guiltless. The monotony of the events which filled up my time of youth and manhood, had left my nature untempted and my passions unexcited. I was not prosperous enough to become intoxicated, nor poor enough to grow moody and dark-hearted, nor sufficiently at ease in my circumstances to sit idle and invent sin. I had so many objects to accomplish, from year to year, that my mind was never free from a certain degree of care; but they never were singly of sufficient magnitude to occasion solicitude, nor to arouse ambition.

\* Not at home.

## CHAPTER II.

My daughter, Ladies, I have already said, was beautiful ; and where Beauty is, there Love will surely find his time to enter. The articles of marriage were concluded on a Christmas Eve, between Rowan Clancy, the son of a neighbouring gentleman, and my blushing child ; and indeed (if the testimony of trembling hands and blushes might be taken) to the delight of each party.

After the necessary documents had been all duly signed and sealed, my friend Clancy (the bridegroom's father) and I went to take a snack of collared head and cider, while the young people, who were not so hungry, nor so curious, remained chatting together in the room which we had left.

"Well, Clancy," said I, "so this great croppy-gardener, this weeder-out of disaffection, is come with his hoes and rakes and nippers, to make the ground clear in our neighbourhood?"

"You mean Dalton?"

"I do."

"He will be welcome to you, at all events. He is always polite and courteous to you, though we, useless beings, come in for the drum-sticks and knuckle-bones of his good will. I never in my life saw one man get so fond of another, at first sight, as he did of you the other day at the inquest. It would almost appear as if he had some appointment in his head for you."

"Poh!" said I, "what appointment do you talk of? Except he made me a process-server or a clerk of petty sessions, what could he do for me?"

"Don't you know that he has a great influence at the castle? How would you like the post of vice-regal secretary?—or a chief magistracy?—or a coronership?—or even a simple commission of the peace? This is a fine money-making, litigious, head-breaking, house-breaking country."

"Poh!" I exclaimed, "I never had, nor ever desired to have, any ambitious projects. I have an affectionate wife, [I heard Mary just turning the handle of the door as she

entered] a dutiful and sensible, yet lively, daughter. I am contented with my condition, and I think if I were tempted by an offer that could bring increase of care with increase of honour, I would have no hesitation in declining— Well, Willy, what's the matter?"

The interruption was occasioned by the sudden entrance of my second boy, who dashed into the room with shoes covered by a composition of snow and puddle, eyes staring and eager, and cheeks flushed with exercise, his dark cord jacket and trousers whitened in sundry places with the fragments of well aimed snowballs, and his shirtfrill lying wrinkled, moist, and plaitless about his neck. He pulled off his little leathern cap (which was shockingly abused, considering the time he had it), and said very loudly :

"Two men, papa, are waiting to spake to you."

"*Spake*, Willy!" cried his mother, "I often told you *spake* was the word."

"Weeting to speak to you, sir," the boy repeated.

"You have a shocking brogue, child," said his mother.

Without tarrying to chide him for the unnecessary length to which he carried the improvement, I went to give audience to the strangers in the kitchen.

One of these fellows was a city bailiff, who brought me a summons to attend as petit juror at the next assizes.

"Poh," said I, "you must not give it me."

"Oh, fait, sir,—"

"I can't go. There, throw it into the fire, and here's a sixpence. You shall have a glass of spirits, if you please. Now mind, you lost my summons; that's an honest fellow."

"Long life to your honour."

And the summons was burned accordingly.

The other man, a little ferret in the pay of Dalton, brought me a letter from that gentleman, which I had been expecting for some days, which I received with no little anxiety. Notwithstanding the tone of indifference which I assumed to Clancy, I had in point of fact, become more closely connected with Dalton, during the previous month, than I cared to let him understand. A magistrate himself, and toiling hard for preferment, he had expressed a wish for my co-operation, and opened to my view prospects of personal advantage which I found it difficult to regard with that indifference of which I boasted. The influence which a little exertion, such

as he recommended, would procure me among the people of the neighbourhood; the emoluments, trifling indeed in appearance, but yet capable of being improved into a return worthy of consideration; the rank to which it would lift me among the gentry of the country; the post which perhaps it would become my right to occupy among the representatives of ancient families, at sessions and assizes; no insolent bailiff nor Peeler to slap the court-house doors in my face; no impertinent crier to pick me out of a crowd with his long white wand, and bid me "Lave that, an' make room for the gentleman o' the Bar—" I figured to myself all these flattering circumstances, while I passed up and down our flagged hall, with the letter still unopened in my hand, under such an agitation of spirits as I had seldom before experienced. Those who have been accustomed to read of the influence of ambition on those characters only who have fixed their desires on some object so dignified and important, as to command an instant and general sympathy, may perhaps smile at my petty aspirings, and refuse to admit the sufficiency of my motives; but the lesson, in all instances, is the same, and the impulse equally violent and tempestuous. Ambition is said to be the passion of advanced years. I found it so. But when it does awake, it acts upon the soul like the waters of the fabled fountain of Bimini, rekindling faded energies and aspirations, and renewing the old man's youth like the eagle's.

Suddenly I heard a stir in the inner room, and Clancy presently opened the door, in order to depart. I started, as if I had been conscious of some guilty act, and hastily concealed the letter, while I advanced to do him the parting honours. Rowan, too, departed for a distant part of the country on some business; after it had been settled that the marriage should take place early in the ensuing month, about which time his return was expected. But fortune laughed in secret at our arrangements.

The letter contained matter of a more startling nature than I had anticipated. It ran as follows:—

"If you regard either my interest, or your own, come hither instantly. My wretched son, after a week's absence, is just returned to ruin me for ever. Come—come at once;

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and take—for your reward, a father's gratitude, and all a friend's endeavours for your benefit."

I ordered a horse, upon the instant, and galloped in the direction of Dalton's house.

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### CHAPTER III.

A PARTY of police were exercising on the lawn before the hall-door. I passed them by, and, entering hastily, found Dalton in his drawing-room, seated at a table, leaning on his elbows, and with his temples resting on his clenched hands. In a chair, at a little distance, sat his son, a youth about eighteen years of age, of excelling beauty, and fashionably dressed, without the slightest appearance of foppery. Soon after I entered, he left the room, a politeness which afforded a considerable relief to his father and myself.

"Is he gone?" Dalton asked, raising his head and gazing round, in anger. "Oh, Tracy, he will send me to my grave!"

"How is this, Dalton?"

"A week he has been away, and now he comes to tell me he has gone in debt five hundred pounds, which must be paid before to-morrow, or my poor boy's character is lost among his respectable acquaintances. He is my joy and my ruin, my delight and my despair. I had rather think of perishing, than let him want the money, for I know his principles of honour to be so quick and fine that it would be consigning him to misery. And yet where should I get it before night?"

He paused, but I was silent.

"Tracy, could you assist me?"

"With what?" said I.

"Lend me this sum."

"Five hundred pounds!" I cried aloud, in consternation.

"Ay, for one day!"

"If but for an hour—" said I—

"What interest you will."

"How could you think," said I, "that it was possible I could have so much——" I paused, for at that instant I recollected that I had got six hundred pounds, (my daughter's wedding portion) into my possession the preceding day. My hesitation did not escape the piercing eye of Dalton.

"If you can serve me, Tracy," he said, "do not refuse to reach out your hand. I am certain of receiving double the sum within a week, and you will bind me to your service for ever."

"Is it not strange," said I, "that so good and talented a young man as Mr. Henry Dalton would place you in so arduous a difficulty?"

"This is a trifle," said Dalton, in great distress, "to what he has done before. He will destroy me utterly. He gambles, races, fights, and sports away all that I gain by toil, and peril to my life."

"I would not listen to his requests."

"Requests! He make me a request for money! Nor would I neither, if he did. But that is never done. He is far too sensitive to ask for it. But when I see him sitting silent there, with the longing in his heart, even while he strives to appear cheerful and indifferent to his necessities, I cannot bear to leave him in restraint."

"Necessities!"

"To him they are become so. Ah, Tracy, youth at best is but a fleeting season, and it is cruelty in age to abridge it of those manly sports which are its pride and pleasure. I see my early days reflected through my boy, and I cannot endure the idea of restricting him in his amusements, any more than I could, at his age, have endured restraint myself."

"But that his own filial affection should not suggest——"

"It would, it would, if he were only aware of the ruin he is bringing on me, but that he knows not, nor must ever know. A great part of my pain on those occasions is in concealing from him the inconvenience he occasions."

"You astonish me!" I exclaimed. "And if your gold flows thus away from you, where do you think of getting riches?"

"The world is full of them," said Dalton, "but where could I find such another son?"

A pause now ensued, during which I felt not a little per-



plexity. I felt sincerely for the father's anguish, peculiar as I considered the cause to be, and yet I could not tell in what way I might assist him. But wherefore need I dwell upon the means he used to prevail with me ? Enough is said when I mention that he did prevail ; and that I placed my daughter's wedding portion in his hands, under the full conviction that it would be refunded before the ensuing month, and with his note of hand to that effect.

As I descended the stairs, young Dalton opened the parlour door, and inquired, with great appearance of interest, after the health of my family, and in particular, but with some appearance of hesitation, after Ellen. I answered all his questions without making any allusion to the intended marriage, for it had been agreed on both sides to keep the circumstance private until it approached the eve of celebration.

I then remounted, and rode home. The house appeared more than usually lonely on that evening. The sky was clear, sunny, and breathless, and the wide prospect around our door was wrapt in a bright winter calm. The reigning silence was so profound, that I heard the trampling of the horses on the hard and echoing high-road to the distance of several miles ; while the voices of those within doors sounded through the open house like the waking noises which a sick man hears through the dulness of his morning lethargy. The snow still remained in the garden ridges and along the hedges, and a few light fragments of mist, that hung suspended and motionless in mid air, seemed to have caught the reflection of the general whiteness from the earth. I entered our parlour slowly, and taking a chair before the fire, began to contemplate the burning turf sods, with that air of grave deliberation so exquisitely painted by Cowper, while Ellen retired to her chamber to indulge her feelings of loneliness in solitude, and Mary sung to the piano.

Towards night, the sky began to blacken, a sullen raw wind drove through the naked trees that intermingled their aged boughs over our thatch, and thick showers of snow were soon after drifted along the soil. The dreariness of the evening was favourable to the moody and feverish influences that were every moment gaining ground within my heart. I felt no desire to mingle in the conversation of my family, and

looked on, in musing and troubled silence, while (in compliance with an ancient custom), they lighted a large candle which was suffered to burn in a corner of the room throughout the night. They sat down to tea, apparently a little perplexed at my continued silence ; and while I joined them in observing the abstinences of the vigil (more strictly than I had done at noon), by forbearing to qualify the acerbity of the narcotic with a spoonful of cream, or to increase the pinguifying influence of the bread by the addition of butter, our meal resembled, by its silence at least, the meditative and mortified after sunset repast of the primitive Christians.

On a sudden we were all startled by the report of fire arms at an alarming proximity, and by the sound of several voices, speaking aloud in those squeaking gibbering tones by which the insurgents of those times were accustomed to disguise their real tones. I sprung from my chair, with a feeling of fiery eagerness, and zeal for action, which I had never before experienced. My wife and daughter looked pale, panting and terrified, uncertain whether to prevent my intention of going out, or suffer me to choose my part in silence. While I snatched my carbine from a corner, little Willy, catching up his cap, was about to run to the hall door before me, when his mother commanded him to remain in the room. Ulick, our eldest and our spoilt, let fall his book, and stared on us in silence.

I hurried out on the lawn, after throwing the ramrod into the barrel to ascertain that it was loaded. The snow had ceased to fall, and the general whiteness of the fields aided the effect of the misty and imperfect moonlight so effectually, that a brightness almost as distinct as that of twilight reigned over the country. I heard a voice, which I recognised as that of Dalton's, at the farther extremity of an extensive sheepwalk, calling to his men aloud, in a tone of anger and impatience. At the same instant three or four fellows, dressed in women's clothes, and with their faces blackened, galloped swiftly across the lawn on rough working horses, returning a wild hurrah ! to the scattered volley which was discharged after them. I ran towards the spot from which Dalton's voice proceeded, and was in the centre of the large plain before alluded to, when I saw another "hand maid" of Lady Rock, galloping in the direction

which his comrades had already taken, and flinging the snow backwards on his track as he sped rapidly along. On a sudden, he espied me, and turning the horse's head, while he pointed forward with the blade of a scythe, in the manner of one leading a charge, he galloped straight towards me. Not entertaining a doubt of his intention, yet feeling a perfect confidence in my weapon, I lowered myself on one knee, and covering him with entire steadiness and composure, withheld my fire until he came completely within shot. As the trampling of the animal sounded nearer, a slight anxiety made my heart thrill, but it did not disturb my aim. A few bounds more would have brought him upon me—I fired, and the next instant beheld him dashing through the cloud of smoke, with revenge and triumph in his look and gesture. He raised the scythe, against which I could only uplift my faithless empty carbine, but at that instant his horse, terrified by the struggle, reared and wheeled directly round, so that he spent his rage and strength in a back-handed stroke, which took me with the point of the rough weapon over the brow, and made a hideous and painful rent to the cheekbone. He did not attempt to renew the blow, for the Police were now within a few yards of the spot on which he stood. He galloped forward while they severally lifted their pieces to bring him down. Stung by the pain of my wound and burning for revenge, I remained kneeling erect, supporting myself on one side, and gazing intently, to watch the issue, on my flying foe. A first shot missed, a second—I bit my tongue in an agony of rage; a third, and I saw the horse plunge forward, and redouble its speed, but the rider lay upon the plain. A thrill of wicked delight shot through my frame, and I sunk down on the snow with all the satiety of joy that gratified vengeance can bestow on an ill regulated mind.

The pain of my wound, slight though it was in reality, enfeebled me so much, that I could with difficulty acknowledge the civilities of Dalton, while he assisted me to rise, and ordered two of the Police to convey me towards the house. When we came near our dwelling he stopped, and with a thoughtful delicacy, for which I felt sincerely grateful to him, suggested that it would be prudent to go to a tenant's house and there dress the cut in some manner, so as to enable me to go home alone, and thus prevent the

shock which my family might receive from seeing me brought to them in this helpless condition.

"Abel Thracy shot!" exclaimed the poor woman at whose door we knocked for admission. "Oh, millia gloria! an' the Pealers and all! Nora, a chree, run an' light the rish."

"And get a cup of cold water," said Dalton. "Where's your husband?" he added after we had entered.

"E' where would he be but in bed, sir, this time o' night?"

"Bring me his shoes."

They brought a pair of heavy brogues covered with mud.

"How came these brogues so dirty?" asked Dalton, in a stern tone.

"E' then, because he was workin' in the garden 'till sunset."

"Hag that you are, and croppy that he is, I'll hang him for these brogues. He was one of the ruffians on the field."

"Faix, an' troth, and as I hope for glory, sir——"

"Hold your peace! Search the house," he said to his police.

They obeyed, while the woman assisted in dressing the wound. But they soon returned to say that their search was ineffectual.

As I lay back in my chair, while the woman went in the next room for some bandage, I perceived an action of Dalton's which perplexed me considerably. Imagining himself to be unobserved, and covered by the partial gloom thrown around him by my own shadow, I saw him take some large substance from his breast, and place two paper parcels along with it. He thrust them all, far in, under the low thatch, after which, hearing the woman's footstep returning along the earthen floor, he came forward into the light, and superintended the washing and dressing of my cut with an officious care.

When this act of mercy was performed, and we prepared to depart, Dalton suddenly turned to the woman and said:

"Yesterday, upon the race course of N —— your husband was one of a large mob, that crossed my son's horse and prevented him from winning a large stake. Your husband was heard to say, that while he was able to lift a cudgel no Orange horse should win upon that course."

"He never said it, not belyin' you, sir."

"I have it from those that heard, and saw him too. He said they'd keep the course Catholic, at any rate, if they lost every thing else ; and that no Orange horse should ever carry a sweepstakes in that county."

"Not belying your honour, he never said it," repeated the woman.

"I never had *sech* a word in my mouth," said the man himself, speaking from the inner room.

"And a week before that, when my son fought that duel with Mr. O'Sullivan, your husband was with the mob on the ground. They gathered about my son, as soon as they saw that O'Sullivan was wounded," he added, turning to me, "they dragged him from his horse, and, but for his own resolution, he would never have left the ground alive, for daring to shoot a Catholic, though in his own defence. And this fellow here was the ringleader of that gang."

"Them that told you that," cried Shanahan (the owner of the house,) springing out of bed, and appearing suddenly among us in his *camicio*, "them that told you that, sir, told you what was not the fact. It was I that saved your son, it was I that thrun myself a-top of him when the blows were comin' down like hail, and Boys', says I, roarin, 'dont ye murther masther Harry, for he's a gentleman, an a good man', says I, 'whatever—'"

He paused on the sudden.

"Whatever his father is," added Dalton, "was not that the word?"

"It was ! I'll not gainsay you," cried the man with vehemence.

"Very well," said Dalton, "you have begun, and have flung down the challenge, let it now be seen who is to be the victor."

At this moment, a faint shriek outside made the speakers start upon the sudden. It was repeated nearer, and Shanahan sprung to the door.

"It is my mother's voice !" he exclaimed. Flinging back the bolt, and throwing the door wide, he gave admittance to an aged woman. She hurried in, striking her bosom with her clenched hands, her nerveless frame shaking with years and terror, and a short shrill cry of anguish breaking at intervals from her thin and bloodless lips. Looking round for her son, she cast herself upon his arm, muttering short

prayers, intermingled with bursts of feeble grief, and shrieks that seemed to come from half exhausted lungs.

"What is the matther, mother?" exclaimed Shanahan, "what brings you from your house at such a time o' night?"

She stared ghastly on him, and pointed out into the dark with one shrivelled hand and arm.

"What have you seen? What's there? Speak, mother!"

She did not answer him, but moaned and shivered, and continued pointing out into the dark.

"Hold up the light. This poor woman, sir," he added, to me, is nearly ninety years of age, an' the senses is lavin' her, poor thing. Where's Phaudrig, mother?"

She shrieked more loudly than before, and repeated the action above described. The man looked now exceedingly alarmed.

"She means something!" he said. "She doesn't screech that way for nothing. Stop, isn't that the sound of a step? Who's there?"

Snatching the light from the little girl Nora, he raised it high above his head, so as to shed its beams upon a group who were entering at that moment. It consisted of some of the Police who had remained upon the field, and who now bore between them the body of the man who had been shot. The aged mother sprung from the arms of her son, and pointed to the corpse, when they had laid it on the ground, with both her bony hands extended and her face turned back with an appealing look to her son. She then pointed to Dalton, to me, and to the Police, and sunk down upon the body.

"It is my brother!" said Shanahan. "Here, take the candle, Nora, and don't be lookin' at me!"

The girl took the light, and he let his head sink upon his breast, while a wild cry of funereal grief broke from the females of the house.

"Shanahan," said I, "I am sorry to see any friend of your's implicated in such a hopeless business as that on which those people were engaged to-night. What had I ever done to your brother that he should lift his weapon against my life?"

And, so saying, I pointed to my wound.

"Mr. Tracy," the man exclaimed, lifting his head and

regarding me with a sternness of expression that had something terrific in it. "I have a word to say to you. You see that corpse that is lying there, warm with the life. I give no blame to that tyger for his death [pointing to Dalton], for what could be expected from an open enemy but blows and blood? But you, that were our neighbour, and that had nothing to gain by our blood, nor to loose by our comfort; you that we never injured you that we often served, you had no reason to turn upon us this way. There's my brother's blood upon my floor, an' you shed it without reason. Now by this cross I swear," and he crossed the fore-fingers of each hand, while he knitted his brows in fury and stared upon me, "I swear this year won't pass 'till I have revenge of you for this night's work. You dhrew his blood without being any way provoked, take care how soon and suddenly you may yourself be called before the same Coort! And you," he added, turning his brawny person round upon Dalton, and uplifting his clenched hand in the energy of desperate menace, "You say right, that the battle is begun. Now I tell you this, and hear me! I never yet was one of those that broke the peace and brought your life in danger, I saved the life of your son, but that indeed was for his own sake an' not yours. I had a sister here, an' she was fool enough to be seen talkin' to you be ye'r two selves, an' 'tis unknown now where she's gone; but well *you* know it, as I fear, an' sure I am that if the truth was known, it would bring shame upon her and us and you. Now hear what I tell you! By this blood that's on my hand this night," he stooped and dabbled his fingers in the reeking neck and shoulder of the corpse, "by this warm blood I swear, I never will rest in pace until I have you brought as low as we are here this night, and there's something tells me that will not be long."

"You are all witnesses of that threat," said Dalton, turning to his men.

"They are," cried Shanahan, "and they will be witnesses of more than that if they live six months. Howld!" he exclaimed bending his fierce brows upon his wife who was clapping her hands and bawling aloud in all the distraction of vulgar grief; "don't shame yourself an' us before 'em, ny showin' 'em that we can be cowed down by any thing

their spite can do. We defy them all, ay, Dalton, I defy you, though you look so sure o' me, an' you will find me a fox to catch for all! I don't threaten you, but look at that!—"

He expanded his bloody hand, and bent forward, staring on the unmoved figure of Dalton, while the corpse lay stark between. The mother gathered low, and gibbering upon her heels, the wife still venting her agony in broken moans, the remainder of the family pressing round with faces of grief or terror, and the police on the other side leaning on their carbines and regarding the half naked desperado with sterna looks—to me the picture had an appalling effect, but it was not so with Dalton; he returned the menace with a hard and eager smile, and then departed without speaking.

"Tracy!" the man called after me as I prepared to follow, "remember what I say to you this night, and look to yourself. If I am to start up through the floore, or come in through the stone wall to you, I will be with you when you're laste thinkin' o' me an' my revenge. I have sworn by the holy cross. And I swear it now again, to have revenge for that poor fellow's blood."

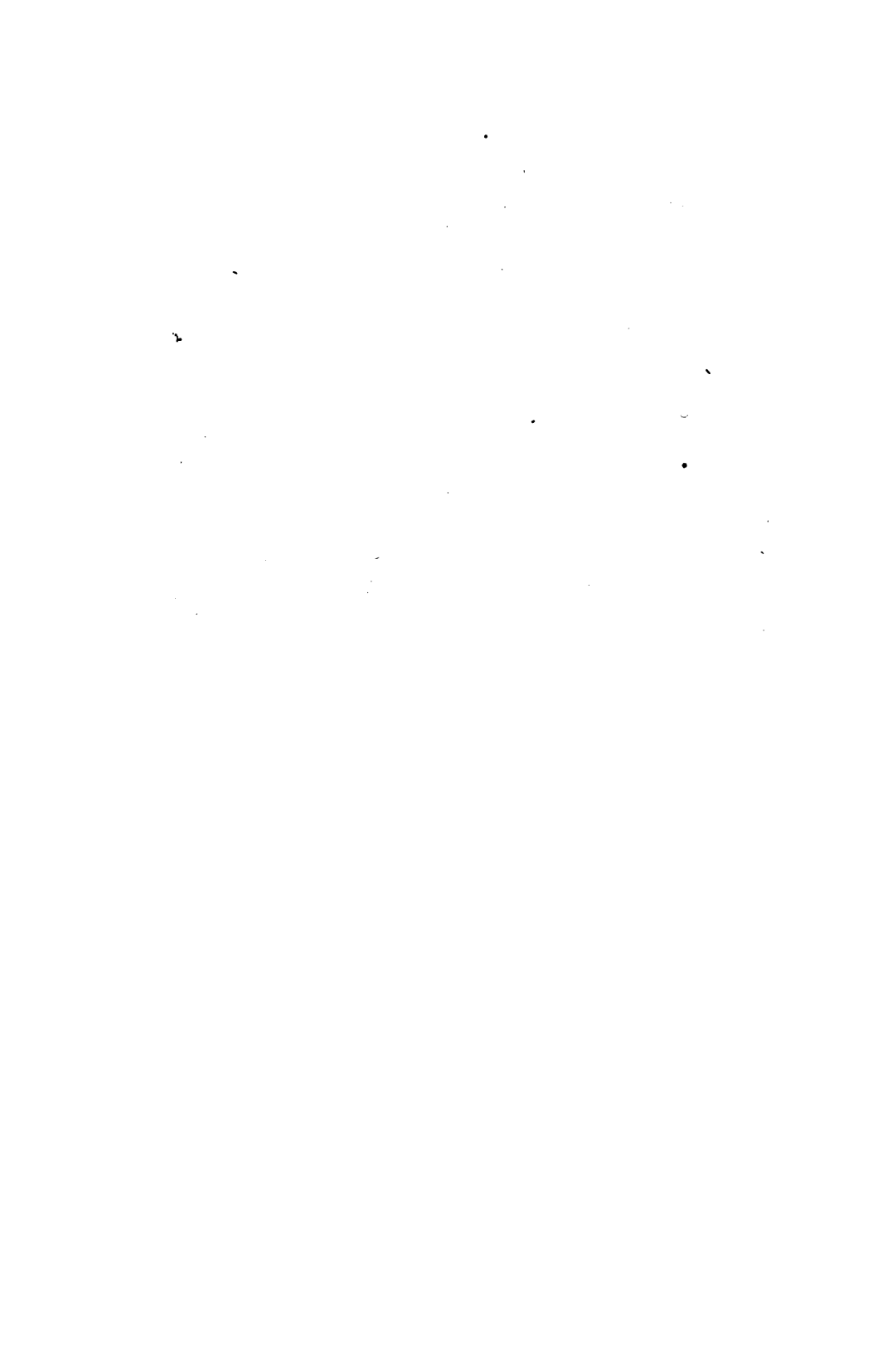
"You are very conscientious," said the voice of Dalton, in the dark outside, "for the ehild of a parricide."

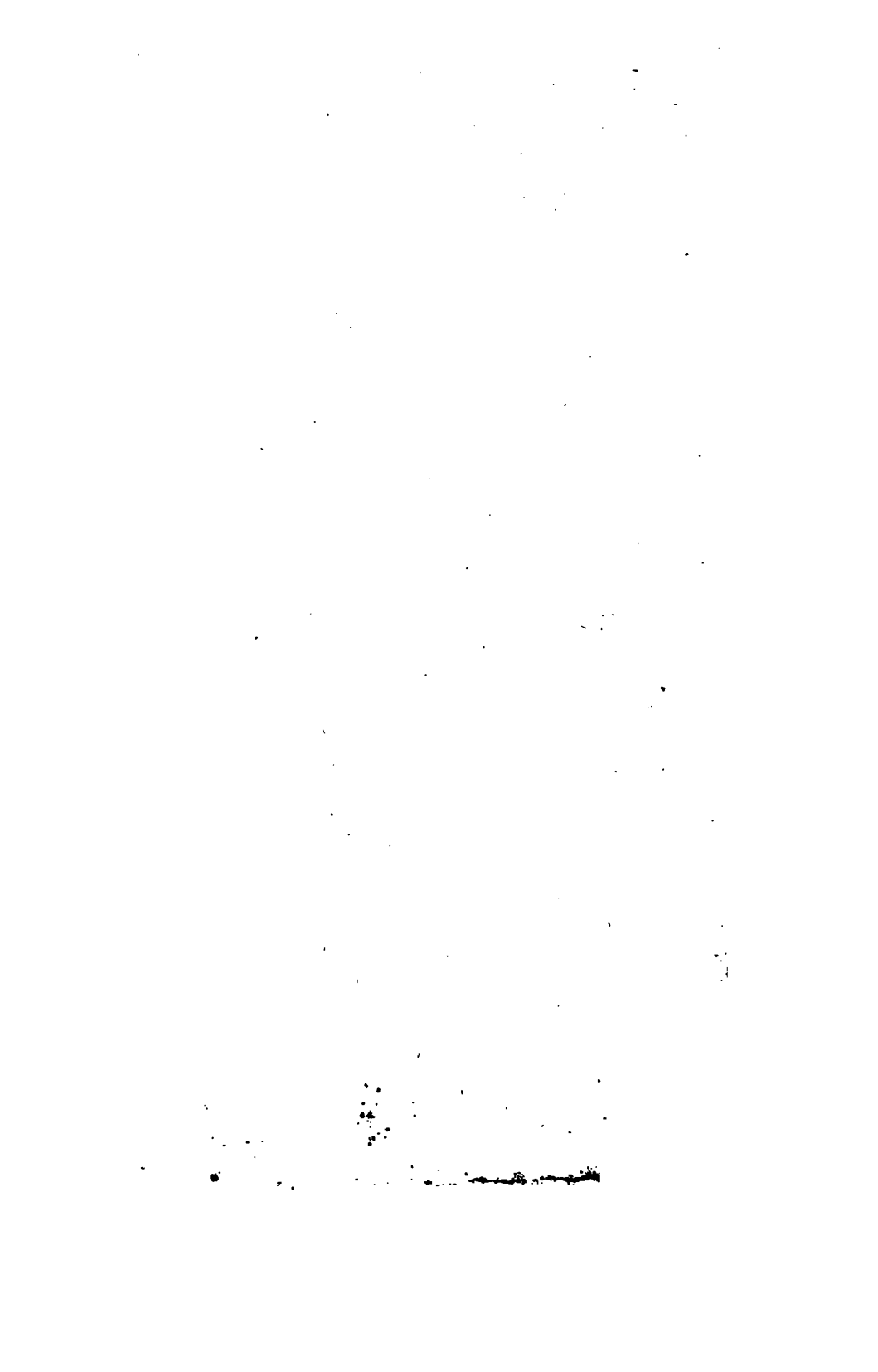
The man stared as if he had been struck by a galvanic shock, and then seizing a pitch-fork, was darting out at the door-way, when his wife sprung up, and, with a wild cry of entreaty, flung both her arms around his neck.

"Hurry out! Hurry out!" she exclaimed, waving her hand rapidly to me. "Oh, Morty, oh, machree, m' asthore!"

I followed her advice, closing the door rapidly behind me, and leaving the man still struggling furiously within. The oath he had taken was one which at this period an Irish peasant seldom swore in vain, and I confess, though not naturally of a fearful disposition, my nerves were somewhat unsettled by the manner in which it was pronounced.













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